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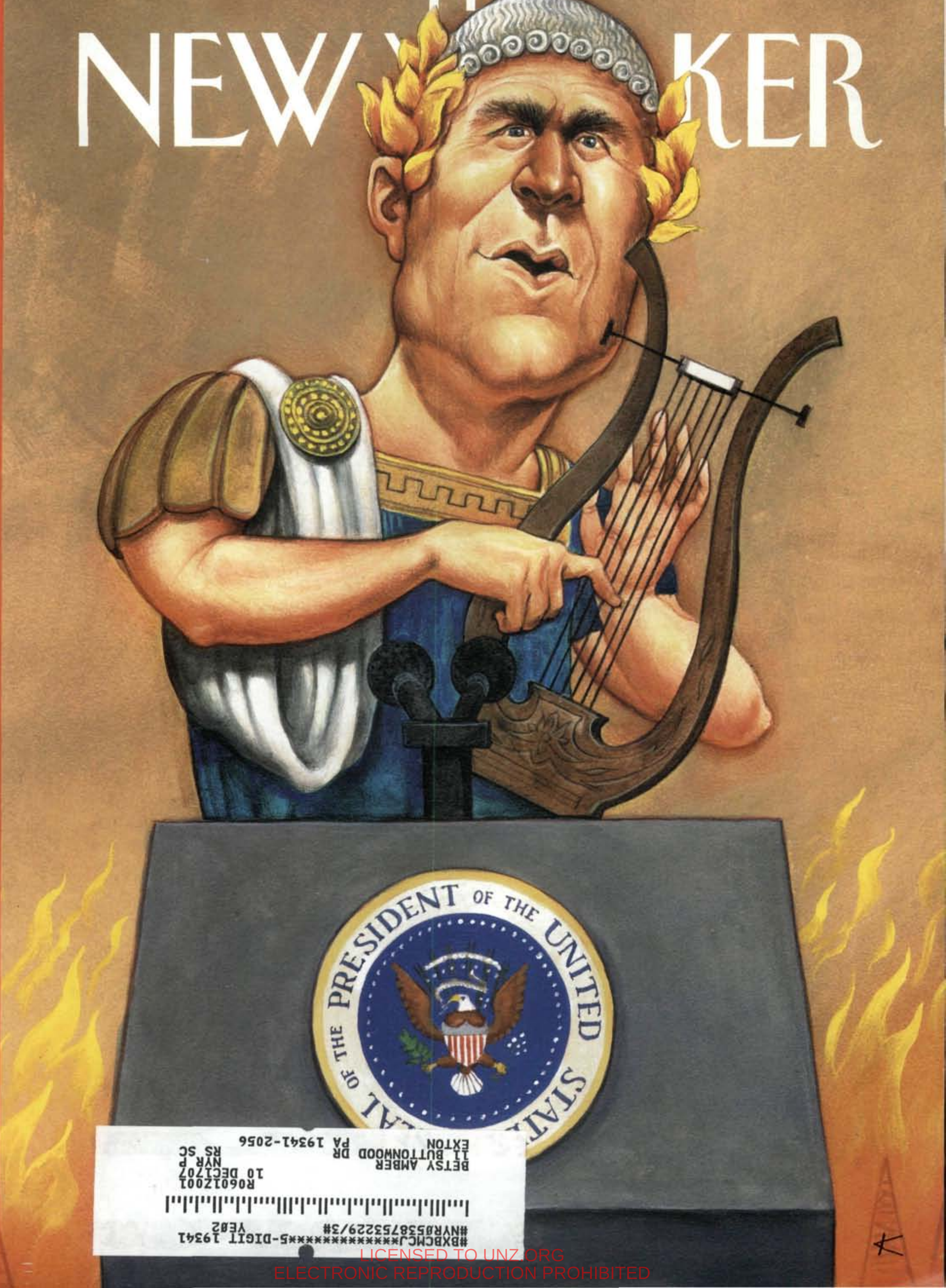
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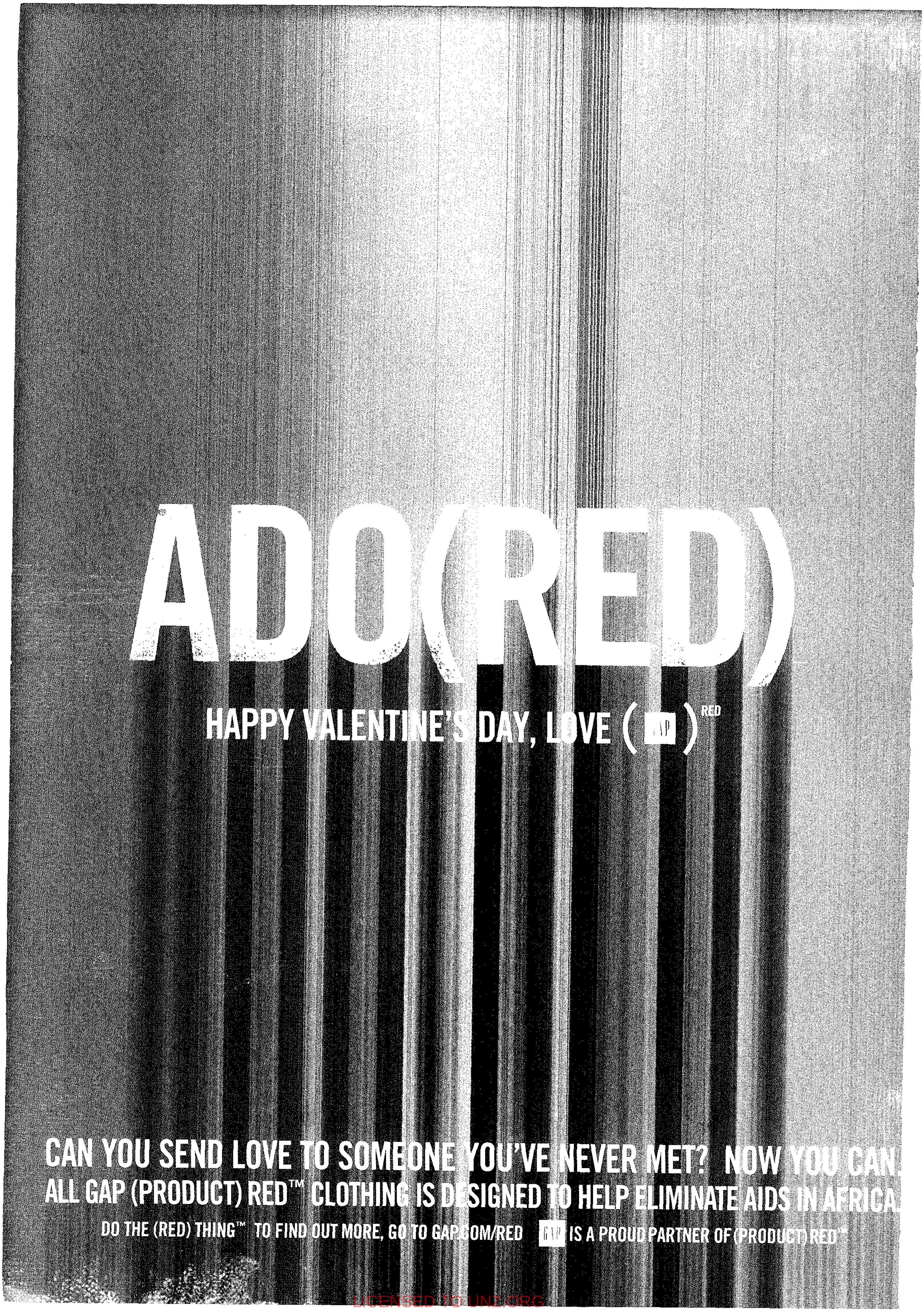
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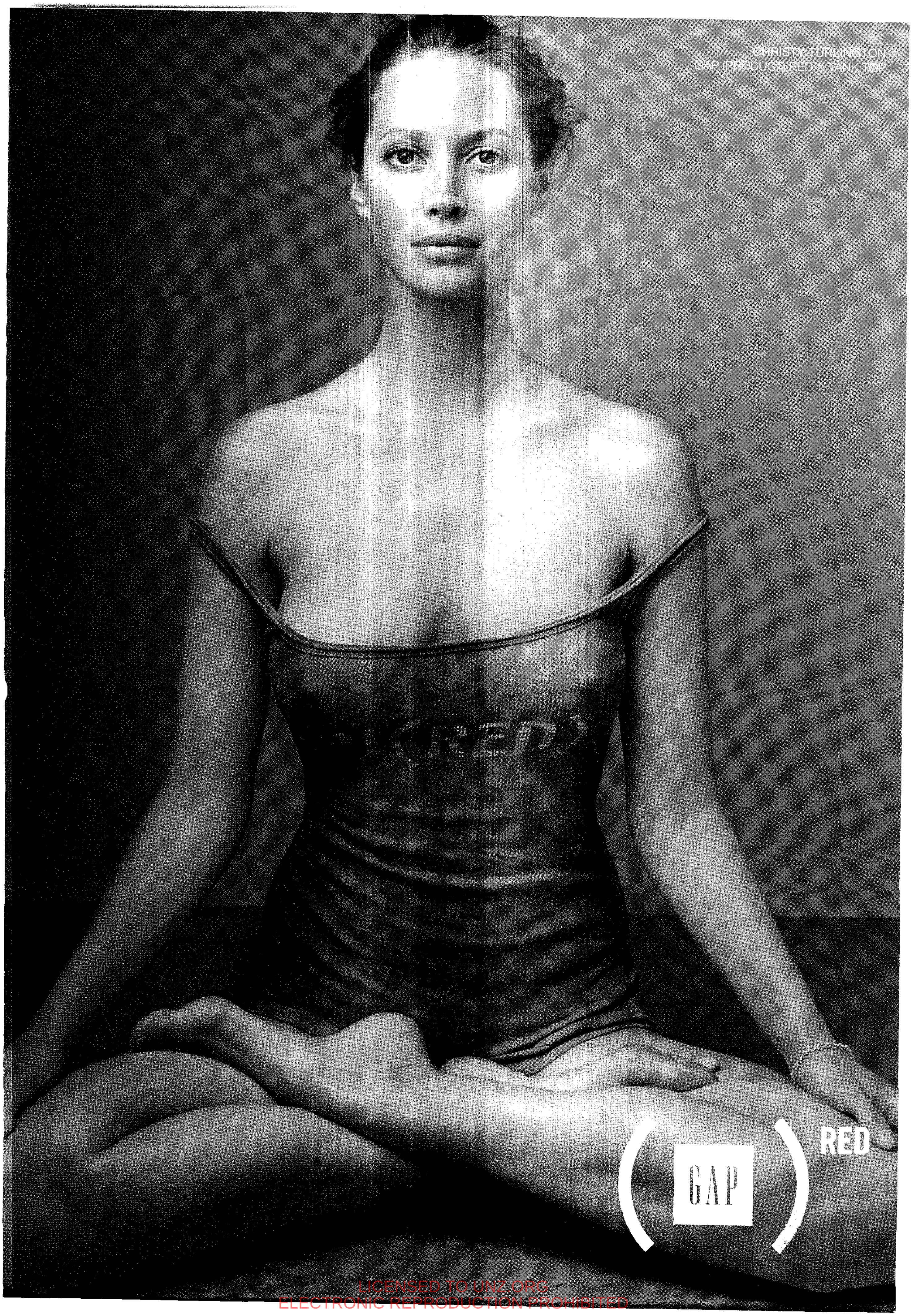
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Martha Grimes

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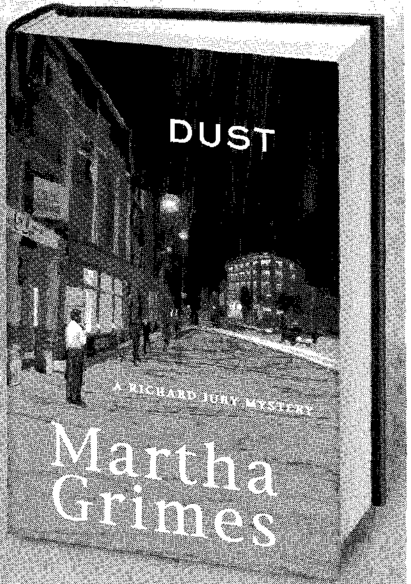

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CONTRIBUTORS

Elizabeth Kolbert ("Mr. Green," p. 34) is the author of "Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change," which is available in paperback.

Steve Coll (Comment, p. 27), a staff writer, won a Pulitzer Prize for "Ghost Wars," a book about the C.I.A. and Afghanistan.

Lauren Collins (The Talk of the Town, p. 31) is the deputy editor of The Talk of the Town.

Ian Frazier (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 41) has a collection of humor essays coming out in the fall.

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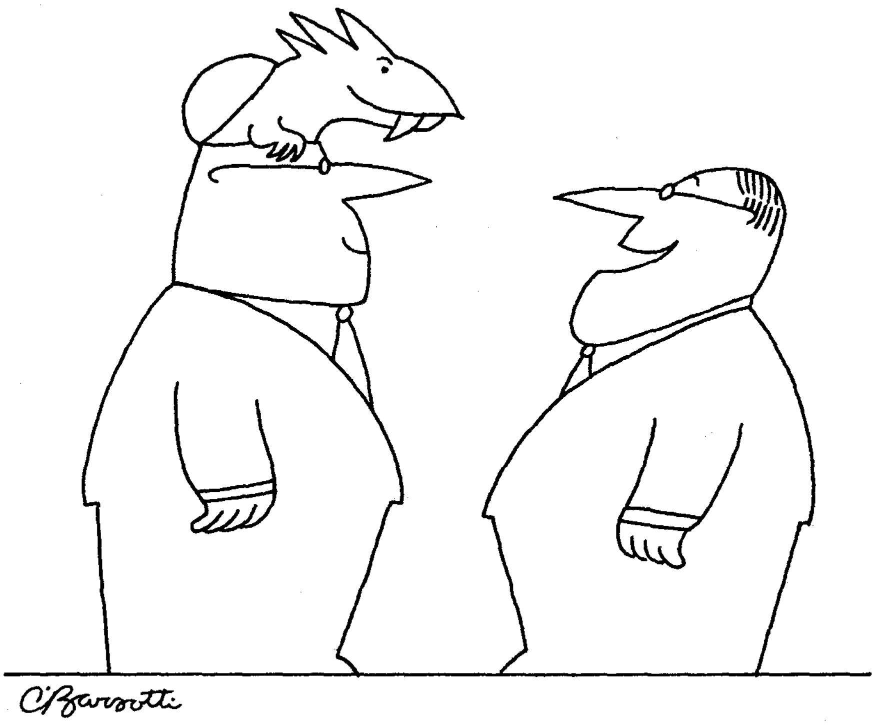
Anita Kunz (Cover) has just published a book of her illustrations entitled "An Anthropomorphic ABC." ♦



"Well, by golly, you may have a creditable defense after all."

THE MAIL

SOLVING ENRON

Malcolm Gladwell's distinction between puzzles and mysteries is a compelling one, but he places the Enron debacle on the wrong side of the divide ("Open Secrets," January 8th). Numerous Wall Street analysts, Arthur Anderson accountants, and even Enron employees used available information to conclude that the firm's accounting was flawed, but these people were pressured to keep their discoveries private. Analysts were silenced by the banks that employed them (banks that had already earned many millions of dollars in fees from Enron and stood to earn many millions more if their analysts continued to rate Enron's stock a "buy"); a senior Anderson accountant who questioned Enron's accounting practices was moved off the Enron account (Anderson, too, feared losing Enron's business); Enron employees who pointed out accounting improprieties were passed over for lucrative promotions. Thus does the mystery of why nobody blew the whistle on Enron become, instead, a puzzle.

Melissa Kantor
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Gladwell argues that unravelling Enron's accounting demanded "experience and insight," not "energy and persistence," and confidently asserts that young Watergate-type journalists, like Woodward and Bernstein, "would never have broken the Enron story." He forgets to mention the importance of skepticism: Enron's partnerships were not mere examples of "incompetence" and unavoidable complexity but elaborate ruses designed to deceive. Unravelling these partnerships was possible only through energetic, persistent, and skeptical bean counting. What has really changed since Watergate is not the importance of persistence but the feasibility of it, due to a new, radical asymmetry between resource-starved newsrooms and well-funded corporate spin.

Glenn Kelman
Seattle, Wash.

Gladwell makes much of the contrast between a mystery (the Enron collapse) and a puzzle (Osama bin Laden's whereabouts). But the difference is surely not in the situation being investigated but in the way we are being presented with the evidence. In the puzzle case, we are given relevant information in an easily digestible format—say, that bin Laden is in Peshawar. All that seems to be different in a mystery is that the evidence is composed of unsynthesized data that are interspersed throughout a slew of irrelevant information, such as the signs of Enron's financial problems contained in its S.E.C. filings. But the fact that Enron's imminent collapse was hidden in plain sight doesn't change the fact that it was hidden, and that Enron's management did its best to mislead investors into believing that the company was immensely profitable even though it wasn't.

Ulrich Meyer
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Colgate University
Hamilton, N.Y.

BORDER DISPUTES

Although I agree with Lou Dobbs on most issues, I take exception to his nativist approach to the question of undocumented workers ("Mad as Hell," by Ken Auletta, December 4th). We have created a class-based form of apartheid in which superiority and inferiority are determined not by whether one is white or black, but by whether one is "legal" or "illegal." These oppositions are historical constructions. Capital moves freely about the earth. Why can't labor do the same?

Robert Hinton
Brooklyn, N.Y.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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THIS WEEK:

Photos of dodos, a slide show of imaginary landscapes by Harri Kallio.

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Daniel Barenboim conducts the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Photograph by Landon Nordeman.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
21	22	23	17	18	19	20

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
DREAM BELIEVER

Richard Foreman's new project, "Wake Up Mr. Sleepy! Your Unconscious Mind Is Dead!," includes video projections, as did last year's "Zomboid!," and has a premise typical of Foreman: that the invention of the airplane helped to smother the human metaphysical instinct. (See page 10.)

NIGHT LIFE
BIG WORLD

Musicians from around the world visit New York City on a regular basis, but it's rare that many of them share the same stage. That's the case with GlobalFest, which brings performers from Brazil, Portugal, France, and elsewhere to Webster Hall this week. (See page 14.)

ART
DOING HIMSELF IN

In a darkly hilarious series of photographs made in 1973, the artist Sam Samore imagined the many ways in which he might put an end to it all, casting himself as a corpse with more second (and third and fourth) chances than a cat. Samore returned to the series, which he called "The Suicidist," in 2003, inflicting a new string of fatal misfortunes on his older, business-suited self. P.S. 1 has united both projects in a single show, which remains up through Jan. 29. (See page 16.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
LAND OF SMILES

Ronald Lauder's Neue Galerie is not the only venue for Austrian art in New York. The Austrian Cultural Forum, in midtown, which has a tiny but elegant concert hall, is hosting a festival of songs by the masters of that most authentically Viennese genre, operetta. (See page 20.)

MOVIES
WORLD SERIES

MOMA's Global Lens program highlights recent films from countries with developing film industries. This year's offerings include "Dam Street," from China, about a young woman singer; "Enough!," from Algeria, about two women trying to save a journalist; and "Kilometre Zero," Hiner Saleem's painful comedy about Kurdish Iraq under Saddam Hussein. (See page 23.)

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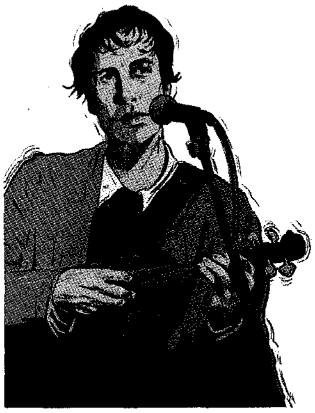
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BIRD SONGS

For years, the Chicago musician Andrew Bird took the stage alone, save for a violin, an electric guitar, a glockenspiel, and a sampler. Using these instruments, and an ability to whistle



RACHEL DOMM

really well, Bird could perform his pastoral, zigzagging songs all by himself. On Jan. 17, Bird, who is about to release a new album, "Armchair Apocrypha," will appear at the Bowery Ballroom, accompanied by the drummer Martin Dosh and the bassist Jeremy Ylvisaker. "Apocrypha" is a vast, optimistic album about depressing things such as falling planes and empires; it downplays Bird's whistle and keening violin and sounds a bit more like progressive rock of the seventies. Bird's ambitions place him in a rough alliance with other artists who are writing long, complex compositions, such as Sufjan Stevens and Joanna Newsom. Perhaps they are enlarging their songs in response to a world that has been dwarfing the charms of a three-minute single. Or perhaps they all know about the planetary alignment that's due in 2008.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ADRIFT IN MACAO
Primary Stages presents a musical parody of film noir, with a book and lyrics by the seasoned absurdist Christopher Durang and music by Peter Melnick. Sheryl Kaller directs. Previews begin Jan. 23. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

ALL THAT I WILL EVER BE
The world première of a new play by Alan Ball ("Six Feet Under"), about the relationship between a Los Angeles native and a Middle Eastern immigrant. Directed by Jo Bonney. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

AT LEAST IT'S PINK
A new musical by Bridget Everett, Michael Patrick King ("Sex and the City"), and Kenny Mellman (of Kiki & Herb), in which a young woman journeys from Manhattan, Kansas, to Manhattan, New York. King also directs. In previews. (Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-868-4444.)

BILLBOARD
Michael Vukadinovich's comedy, inspired by a recent trend in advertising, is about a man who tattoos a corporate logo on his forehead. In previews. Opens Jan. 18. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE FEVER
Wallace Shawn plays a man of privilege who is forced to confront the poverty of the Third World, in the New Group's revival of his one-person drama. Scott Elliott directs. In previews. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

FRANK'S HOME
A new play by Richard Nelson ("James Joyce's The Dead") explores Frank Lloyd Wright's troubled family life. Robert Falls directs. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

IN THE HEIGHTS
The ethnic mix of Washington Heights is the focus of this new musical, with music and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda and a book by Quiara Alegria Hudes. In previews. (37 Arts, 450 W. 37th St. 212-307-4100.)

THE JEW OF MALTA / *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*
Theatre for a New Audience presents Christopher Marlowe's play and its Shakespearean counterpart in repertory, with F. Murray Abraham as their respective Jewish villains, Barabas and Shylock. In previews. (Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

MUST DON'T WHIP 'UM
The alt-country artist Cynthia Hopkins plays a failed nineteen-seventies singer staging her farewell concert, in this prequel to her 2004 show "Accidental Nostalgia." In previews. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

THE POLISH PLAY
This Katharsis Theatre Company production, conceived and directed by Henry Wishcamper, combines the plots of "Macbeth" and "Ubu Roi" and features a mixed cast of live actors and puppets. In previews. Opens Jan. 19. (Walker Space, 46 Walker St. 212-868-4444.)

A SPANISH PLAY
John Turturro directs Zoe Caldwell and Denis O'Hare in the English-language première of Yasmina Reza's new work, which takes place at a theatre rehearsal. In previews. (Classic Stage, 136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210.)

TRANSLATIONS
Manhattan Theatre Club revives Brian Friel's drama from 1980, about an Irish town contending with the forces of cultural imperialism. Garry Hynes directs. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

UNDER THE RADAR 2007
The Public Theatre presents its third annual festival of new work, with offerings from Anne Bogart, Mike Daisey, and the Canadian troupe Old Trout Puppet Workshop, among others. Opens Jan. 17. (425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. For complete schedule, visit www.publictheater.org.)

WAKE UP MR. SLEEPY! YOUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND IS DEAD!
The avant-garde master Richard Foreman returns, with a multimedia piece that links the birth of air travel to the death of the modern imagination. Previews begin Jan. 18. (Ontological Theatre at St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-352-3101.)

NOW PLAYING

ANGRY YOUNG WOMEN IN LOW-RISE JEANS WITH HIGH-CLASS ISSUES
Matt Morillo, a comedy writer from Long Island, directs his own series of sketches about the conundrums facing contemporary urban hotties—namely, thong underwear, bikini waxes, bad boyfriends, and late feminism. Though the language is blue, the skits have the good-natured mildness of network television comedy. Ironically, the best thing about these meandering riffs is the pitch-perfect dialogue that Morillo writes for the men in the ladies' lives: mystified young guys in generic jeans who prefer not to think about their issues. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 212-868-4444.)

AS YET THOU ART YOUNG AND RASH
Target Margin Theatre begins its season of updated Greek classics with this adaptation of Euripides' war-minded play "Suppliants." David Herskovits directs. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-352-3101.)

BLACKOUT
In this play by Michael I. Walker, inspired by the work of James Baldwin, six strangers meet on a corner in Hell's Kitchen during the 2003 blackout. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE COUNTRY WIFE
The Restoration playwright William Wycherley wrote this bawdy, amoral satire of marriage and courtly lust in 1675; after 1753, it existed only in expurgated form for almost two hundred years. It looks plump, powdered, and peachy in this uncut production, directed by John Ficarra as a paean to the glam-rock excesses of Baroque life. In Wycherley's plot-heavy comedy, a cunning gallant (Richard Haratine) spreads the news among London's jealous old husbands that his recent trip to Paris resulted in his unmanning. As a faux eunuch, he expects to have unbridled access to their wives—and, indeed, he gets more action in the boudoir than even he can handle, giving him a chance to test the virtue of England's libidinous lovelies. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-352-3101.)

DUTCHMAN
A revival of Amiri Baraka's 1964 race drama, about a white woman's seduction of a black man on a train. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-989-2020.)

THE GERMANS IN PARIS
Jonathan Leaf's quick-witted study of expatriate Paris in the eighteen-forties follows a circle of famous radicals and poets as they fire off fusillades of pamphlets and poems and build dialectical castles in the air. When a young and fearful Karl Marx (Ross Beschler) is arrested and threatened with exile for publishing seditious writings, he turns to his worldly colleague, the poet Heinrich Heine (Jon Krupp), to get him out of jail. Heine is an ambivalent ally, to say the least—but, then, the youthful Marx as portrayed here is hardly a model of courage under duress. As directed by James Milton, the production is erratic, but Leaf's dialogue has an epigrammatic shine. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 212-352-3101.)

GET YOUR WAR ON
As part of the "Under the Radar" festival, Rude Mechanicals brings David Rees's political comic strip to the stage, in an adaptation by Kirk Lynn. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

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THE MONUMENT
In Colleen Wagner's play, presented by the Clockwork Theatre, a woman rescues a convicted war criminal from execution, on the condition that he obey her every command. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

PARTY TIME
The Talking Band's play with music, written and directed by Paul Zimet, follows two soldiers who are stuck in the desert under harrowing circumstances. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Through Jan. 21.)

PURITY
Thomas Bradshaw's new play, about a group of depraved college professors, is a disturbing meditation on race, assimilation, and child pornography. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Through Jan. 23.)

THE SCENE
Perhaps one of the most tiresome examinations of the male ego to hit the boards in recent years. As Charlie, an out-of-work actor, Tony Shalhoub does his best to find meaning in Theresa Rebeck's thin, resentful script, but it's merely a platform for her ill will toward men. Christopher Evan Welch, as the close friend whom he betrays, is given too much room by the director, Rebecca Taichman, to indulge in sitcom tics; we can see his anticipation before every punch line. The women are even worse. Patricia Heaton, as Charlie's wife, is almost transparent, and Anna Camp's character, a floozy who brings Charlie's world to a crashing end, is just another bottle blonde who uses what she has—good looks and will—to get what she wants. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

TOYS IN THE ATTIC
A remounting of Lillian Hellman's last major play. Austin Pendleton directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

THE VIETNAMIZATION OF NEW JERSEY
The Off Broadway début of Christopher Durang's 1977 comedy, about a Vietnam veteran returning to his parents' house in Piscataway. (Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

YOU BELONG TO ME:
DEATH OF NATIONS PART V
This frenzied historical mashup by Josh Fox and his International WOW Company describes, in searing stage pictures that tend to wear out their welcome, the problem of what and who remains unclaimed at the end of a war. The first—and most pious—act centers on a freed slave in the crumbling Confederacy; the second, mercifully spiked with morbid humor, depicts the sexual and homicidal escapades of a shrieking Nazi hausfrau; and the last is set at a military hospital in an era resembling our own. Fox's zany take on victimhood is as undisciplined as it is humane. In his hands, the plights of wartime are considered, made farcical, and ultimately swamped within a maddening theatrical sprawl. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Through Jan. 23.)

Also Playing

THE APPLE TREE: Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300. **THE BIG VOICE: GOD OR MERMAN?:** The Actor's Temple, 339 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **A CHORUS LINE:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COAST OF UTOPIA, PART ONE: VOYAGE:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **THE COAST OF UTOPIA, PART TWO: SHIPWRECK:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **COMPANY:** Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **GREY GARDENS:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **NO CHILD . . .:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **REGRETS ONLY:** City Center, Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. **ROOM SERVICE:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER:** Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. Through Jan. 20. **TWO TRAINS RUNNING:** Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. **THE VERTICAL HOUR:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE:** Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Jan. 18: The acoustic rocker **Jeffrey Gaines** landed in the Top Forty in 2001, after an inspired live cover of Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" caught the ear of radio programmers. His own songs are soulful and introspective, enhanced by his burnished voice. Jan. 19: Great balls of fire! **Jerry Lee Lewis** continues to pound the piano with satanic glee. Jan. 20: **Big Bad Voodoo Daddy,** one of the first bands to capitalize on the retro-swing craze of the nineties, gets things jumping. Jan. 23: The swamp rock of the Louisiana vocalist and pianist **Marcia Ball.** Splitting the bill is **John Hammond,** a New York City native who's been doing his part to keep country blues alive for some forty years.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Jan. 17: **Andrew Bird,** a onetime fiddler for the Squirrel Nut Zippers, plays a slightly skewed form of exotic folk music, full of elements of jazz and rock. Jan. 18: **Sloan,** a quartet originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, has a few things that other indie-rock darlings lack. First, the band has been around for close to two decades. Second, it has actually had hits (albeit in Canada). Third, the four close friends, who frequently swap instruments and rotate songwriting duties, are clearly having a good time turning out power-pop music, which they do at length on their eighth studio release, "Never Hear the End of It." Jan. 20: A few acts with local roots, including **Ollabelle,** a gospel-tinged ensemble; **Kaki King,** a folk rocker known for her unconventional guitar playing; and **Hem,** a fetching alt-country group.

The Canadian indie-rock quartet Sloan plays the Bowery Ballroom on Jan. 18.

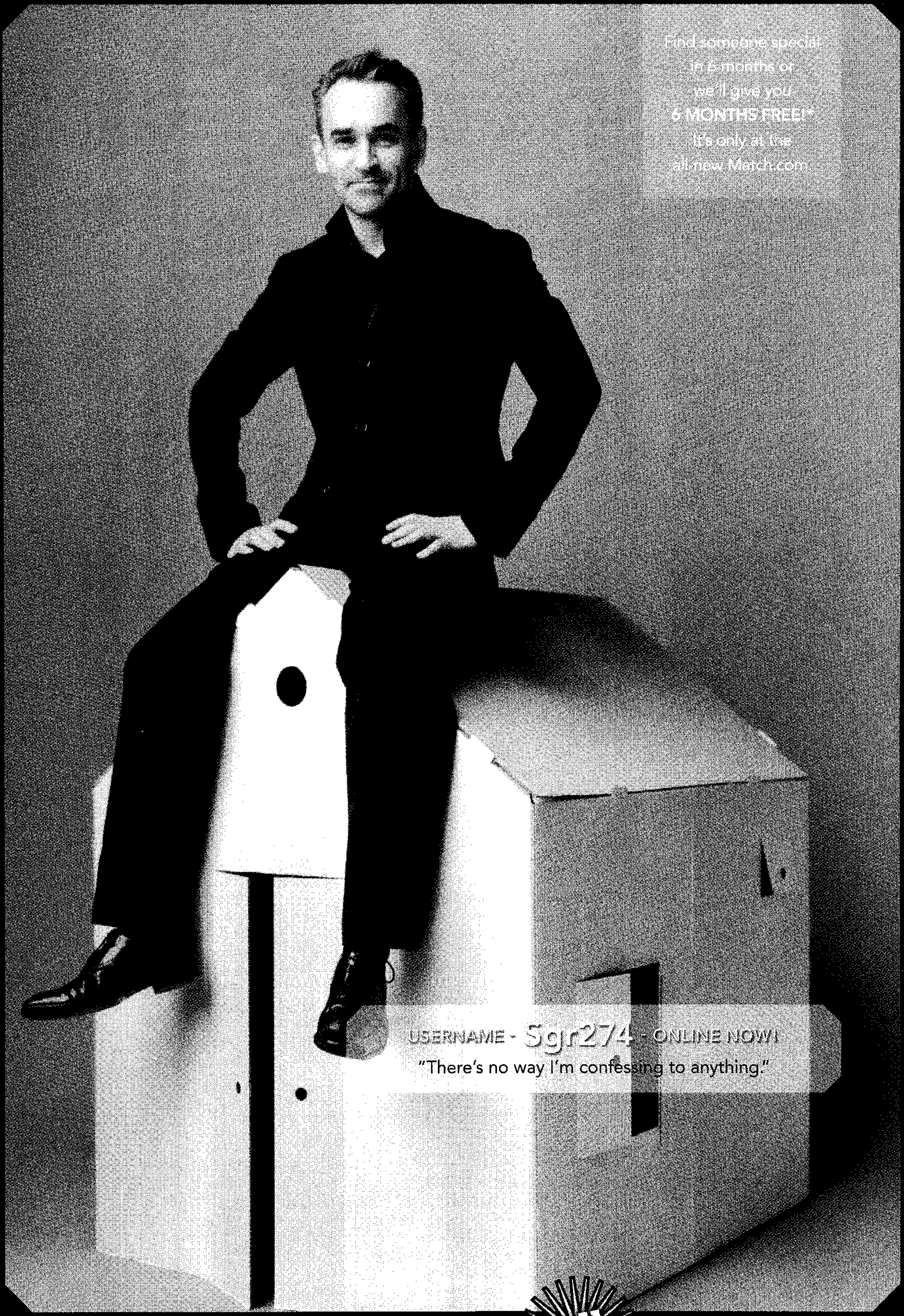
LISELOTTE WATKINS

HOUSING WORKS BOOKSTORE CAFÉ
126 Crosby St. (212-334-3324)—Jan. 19: The singer-songwriter **Judith Owen** (see also Joe's Pub). With the former Jayhawks drummer **Tim O'Reagan.** Jan. 21: A benefit for the Music Maker Relief Foundation, which assists old blues musicians who are living in poverty, with the down-home sounds of **Megan Reilly, River Alexander's Mad Jazz Hatters,** the **Crooners,** and others.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Jan. 19: The influential Boston post-punk band **Mission of Burma.** Jan. 20: The **Subdudes,** a New Orleans-based R. &. B.-and-rock ensemble, are a sensational live band.

ISSUE PROJECT ROOM
400 Carroll St., Brooklyn (718-330-0313)—The month-long "Independents" program continues, with more offerings from the musical fringes. The label Ecstatic Peace, which was started by Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore in the early eighties, takes the reins Jan. 18-19. The first night includes experimental and psychedelic folk from the guitarist, songwriter, and singer **Christina Carter,** and from **MV+EE,** with the **Bummer Road.** The following night, **Religious Knives** (Maya Miller and Michael Bernstein, of the Double Leopards, who also run the Brooklyn-based cult label Heavy Tapes) delivers droning noise and improvisation. **Bark Haze,** featuring Moore and Gown (a.k.a. Andrew MacGregor), follows with more edgy sounds. Jan. 20: The Family Vineyard label presents the avant-blues guitarist **Loren Connors** and the free-jazz saxophonist **Paul Flaherty,** along with other acts. (For full schedule, see www.frontporchproductions.org.)

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Jan. 18: The comedic actor **Harry Shearer** and his wife, the singer-songwriter **Judith Owen,** première their musical-theatre piece "This Is So Not About the Simpsons! (American Voyeurs)." Jan. 19: **Lesley Gore** may forever be linked with teen-age impetuousness, but her work as a singer-songwriter is completely grownup.



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MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Jan. 19: The underground folk hero **Gary Higgins** recorded his first and only album, "Red Hash," in 1973, amid dire circumstances: he had been arrested on drug charges and was facing heavy jail time, so he finished the album in one forty-hour session. It was released, but Higgins ended up incarcerated and the album didn't sell. Within decades, though, "Red Hash" had become a collector's item, cherished by an up-and-coming generation of new-folk artists. The Chicago label Drag City rereleased the album in 2005, and coaxed Higgins, who had gone on to raise a family and become a registered nurse, out of retirement.

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—Jan. 20: **Gob Iron,** a new collaboration between Son Volt's Jay Farrar and Varnaline's Anders Parkers, makes coal-dark folk music on its début album, "Death Songs for the Living."

UNION HALL
702 Union St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-638-4400)—Jan. 17: The **Cold War Kids,** a quartet of young men from Los Angeles, play rock songs full of chiming guitar work, jittery drumming, and barroom piano playing. Jan. 19: The singer-songwriter **Mark Eitzel,** one of our finest poets of tenderloin passion and despair.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Jan. 19: The **Dears,** a Montreal collective led by the charismatic vocalist Murray Lightburn, are known for turning out sprawling orchestral pop in the vein of Morrissey and Serge Gainsbourg. Their latest album, "Gang of Losers," is a tighter, less elaborate affair than their previous work, but the emotional impact is just as great. Jan. 21: GlobalFest, an annual gathering organized by a few groups with an interest in sounds from abroad (World Music/Crash Arts, the World Music Institute, and the Public Theatre), presents the Brazilian singer **Lenine,** the Portuguese vocalist **Sara Tavares,** the Los Angeles band **Dengue Fever,** which specializes in sixties-influenced Cambodian psychedelic rock, and other international acts.

WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER
Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City (212-945-0505)—Jan. 20-21: The "American Beauty Project" turns a number of musicians, including **Jorma Kaukonen, Ollabelle, Toshi Reagon,** the **Holmes Brothers, Jen Chapin,** and the **Klezmatics,** loose on two of the Grateful Dead's biggest albums of the seventies, "Workingman's Dead," on the first night, and "American Beauty," on the second.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

"AMERICAN SONGBOOK"
Jan. 17: The rapper, actor, and crooner **Mos Def** leads a big band. Jan. 18: **Fred Hersch** is a bracing pianist and bandleader who also has a gift for composing art songs, as a number of vocalists, including **Kate McGarry, Jessica Molaskey, Peter Eldridge,** and **Michael Winther,** will make clear. Jan. 19: The Broadway mainstay **Judy Kuhn** delves into the songs of Laura Nyro. (Allen Room, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500.)

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Jan. 17-20: **Jon Hendricks,** the grand old man of vocalese (the nearly lost art of writing and singing lyrics to existing jazz solos), is a generous performer who's always willing to spread the mirth around.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Jan. 16-21: The multi-decade consistency of the octogenarian pianist **Hank Jones** is one of the wonders of the jazz world. The trumpeter **Roy Hargrove** and the singer **Roberta Gambarini** join his trio here.

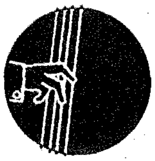
IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—A lot has happened since **Jacky Terrasson** grabbed critical attention, back in the mid-nineties. A flood of bright young pianists rose behind him, nearly sweeping him away, but he remains a highly personal stylist who is always worth returning to. This is even truer since he reassembled his original trio (here Jan. 17-21), which includes the bassist **Ugonna Okegwo** and the remarkable drummer **Leon Parker.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Jan. 20: The Winter JazzFest shines the spotlight on some of the genre's unsung heroes. Eighteen bands play the venue's three spaces; highlights include the avant stylings of the violinist and vocalist **Carla Kihlstedt** in 2 Foot Yard, the psychedelic rock of the guitarist **Gary Lucas** with his band Gods and Monsters (who will be joined by the trombonist **Roswell Rudd**), and the Sarah Vaughan-meets-Erykah Badu smoothness of the Canadian singer **Kellylee Evans.** Tenor-sax lovers will also find much of interest, as the bill includes **Skerik's** Maelstrom Trio; **Ravi Coltrane,** in an outfit led by the French guitarist **Misja Fitzgerald-Michel;** and **Fred Anderson,** Chicago's free-jazz veteran, playing in the bassist **Henry Grimes's** quartet Spaceship on the Highway. (For full program, see www.winterjazzfest.com.)

MERKIN CONCERT HALL
129 W. 67th St. (212-501-3330)—Jan. 22: The clarinettist **Don Byron** demonstrates his comfort with the outré and the mainstream by duetting with the pianists **Ursula Oppens,** a new-music doyenne, and **Kenny Barron,** a paragon of post-bop elegance.

THE STONE
Ave. C at 2nd St. (No phone)—The concept of creative expression known as M-Base, or Macro-Basic Array of Structured Extemporizations, might be mystifying, but the music of its master proponent, the saxophonist, composer, and educator **Steve Coleman** (who is the curator of this month's program here), is both accessible and thrilling. Coleman himself is here on Jan. 18 and Jan. 21 with his band Five Elements. Jan. 19: The pianist **Vijay Iyer** and his trio. Jan. 23: The former Coltrane bassist **Reggie Workman** and the trombonist **George Lewis,** who is also a multimedia artist and electronics pioneer. (For more information, visit www.thestonenyc.com.)

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Jan. 16-21: **Kenny Barron,** the dean of mainstream pianists, is joined by the bassist **Kiyoshi Kitagawa** and the drummer **Francisco Mela.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.



JAZZ NOTES
BEST OF 2006

Michael Carvin, "Marsalis Music Honors Michael Carvin" (Marsalis Music)—A mainstream horn-plus-rhythm quartet let loose on standards. Do you feel the dust settling already? Not on this sharp set, led by an under-recorded drummer whose enthusiasm generates an explosive turn from the tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland.

Ornette Coleman, "Sound Grammar" (Sound Grammar)—The concept here isn't quite new: in the late sixties, Coleman had a quartet with two acoustic bassists. Still, returning to the plucked-and-bowed setup brings out a coiled lyricism in the saxophonist that shakes up romps like "Matador" and his 1959 blues number "Turnabout" (which he has retitled "Turnaround") and brings a wrenching emotion to the ballad "Sleep Talking."

Bill Frisell, "Bill Frisell, Ron Carter, Paul Motian" (Nonesuch)—As a departure from his forays into twisted Americana and world music, the inventive guitarist delivers a bona-fide jazz album. The all-star threesome performs like a seasoned band, and Frisell remains the only six-string poet of his generation.

The Kevin Hays Trio, "For Heaven's Sake" (Jazz Eyes)—There are plenty of talented pianists under the age of fifty, but few have Hays's melodic charms and sense of style. Here he produces superbly designed improvisations on standards and jazz classics. He reworks Sonny Rollins's "Sonnymoon for Two" by stretching out the phrasing, to great effect; Hays is a player who knows that he isn't being paid by the note.

Aaron Irwin Group, "Into the Light" (Fresh Sound New Talent)—Irwin is a lyrical alto saxophonist and a compelling original composer, as well as a canny bandleader. Unconcerned about sharing space on his début with another horn player, Irwin calls on the seasoned tenor saxophonist Rich Perry, and their interplay injects subtle tension into imaginative interpretations of Porter's "So in Love" and even "All the Things You Are."

Joe Lovano, "Streams of Expression" (Blue Note)—The album's centerpiece, a vivacious Gunther Schuller arrangement of three tunes from Miles Davis's "Birth of the Cool" recordings, works so well that the missteps don't seem quite so egregious—although the newly invented double-necked soprano saxophone that Lovano trots out should be hurled into a deep well.

Paul Motian Band, "Garden of Eden" (ECM)—The drummer Motian's love for the electric guitar reaches a new peak with this three-guitar group. Throwing in two saxophones to thicken the sound even further, Motian somehow maintains a spacious sonic environment that is both affecting and intriguing.

Houston Person and Bill Charlap, "You Taught My Heart to Sing" (HighNote)—The pianist Charlap is decorous and loath to rumble; the tenor saxophonist Person, warm and enveloping. They mesh together like father and son (Person is thirty-two years older than Charlap) on a duet program that shines with old-school charm.

Daryl Sherman, "Guess Who's in Town" (Arbors)—Sherman's winsome voice, cozy delivery, and sure piano work turn such chestnuts as "Don't Worry 'Bout Me" and "Then I'll Be Tired of You" and her own standard-to-be, "Welcome to Manhattan," into things of intimate beauty. Among the exceptional supporting players, the guitarist Jon Wheatley stands out.

Anthony Wilson Nonet, "Power of Nine" (Groove Note)—The anxiety of influence hasn't touched Wilson, a guitarist and composer who is the son of Gerald Wilson, the legendary West Coast arranger. The younger Wilson exhibits an ear for tonal color and spruce charts, coaxing a fulsome power from his compact nonet. He also elicits a heartfelt performance from his sometime boss Diana Krall on the elegiac Jimmy Rowles ballad "Looking Back."

—*Steve Futterman*

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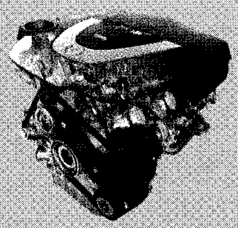

fig. A

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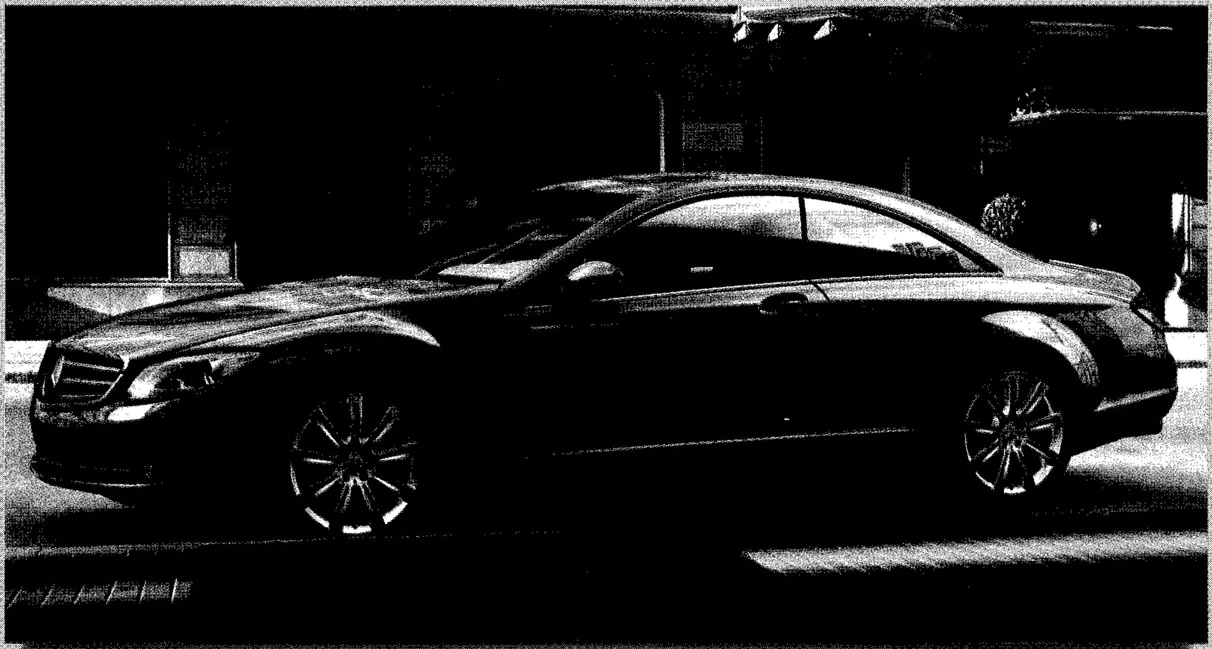

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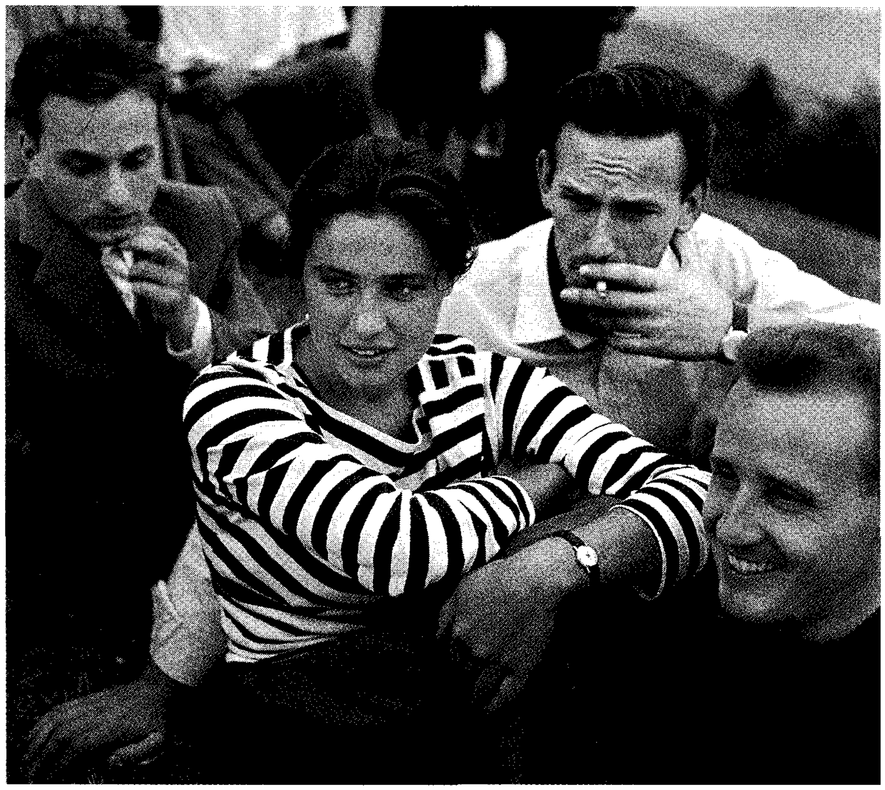

Elio Ciol's show at Cohen Amador includes "Giovani y Daniele" (1957).

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s"** features work by ten Weimar-era artists, including Otto Dix, George Grosz, and Ludwig Meidner. Through Feb. 19. ♦ **"Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall: An Artist's Country Estate."** Through May 20. ♦ **"Americans in Paris, 1860-1900."** An enjoyable show of questing Yankees abroad—among them Whistler, Cassatt, Eakins, Sargent, and Homer. Through Jan. 28. ♦ **"Nan Kempner: American Chic."** Through March 4. ♦ **"Coaxing the Spirits to Dance: Art of the Papuan Gulf."** Through Sept. 3. ♦ **"Discovering Tutankhamun: The Photographs of Harry Burton."** Through April 29. ♦ **"One of a Kind: The Studio Craft Movement."** Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—The city that never sleeps is the setting, and partly the subject, of the multimedia artist Doug Aitken's first U.S. public project, **"Sleepwalkers."** A series of moving pictures depicting five different characters—an office worker (played by Tilda Swinton), a businessman (Donald Sutherland), an electrician (Seu Jorge), a postal worker (Chan Marshall), and a bike messenger (Ryan Donowho)—making their way through New York after dark is projected on the museum's exterior walls. Through Feb. 12, nightly from 5 to 10. ♦ **"Manet and the Execution of Maximilian."** Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"OMA in Beijing: China Central Television Headquarters by Rem Koolhaas and Ole Scheeren."** Through Feb. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Spanish Painting from El Greco to Picasso: Time, Truth, and Memory"** includes works by Zurbarán, Murillo, Velázquez, and Cotán, among many others. Through March 28. ♦ **"Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York."** Through Jan. 21. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980-2005."** Through Feb. 11. ♦ All roads in modernism lead back to Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy in **"Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World."** Through Jan. 21. ♦ **"Picasso and American Art."** Through Jan. 28. ♦ **"Photography and the Self: The Legacy of F. Holland Day."** Through March 11. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life, 1990-2005."** Through Jan. 21. ♦ **"Tigers of Wrath: Watercolors by Walton Ford."** Through Jan. 28. ♦ **"Ron Mueck."** Through Feb. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

DRAWING CENTER
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—Starting in 1998, Christine Taylor Patten made two thousand and one pen-and-ink drawings, each measuring one inch square and titled consecutively for the years 1 through 2000 A.D. Two hundred and sixty-one elements from the **"Micro/Macro"** project (which includes one much larger drawing) hang in a room-wrapping, eye-level row, the postage-stamp-size pieces set side by side, like flip-book pages. Abstract studies of spheres, triangles, and arcs morph into successive iterations, establishing a loosely astronomical iconography, as if Taylor Patten were sketching Platonic solids. Perhaps fittingly, the idea is, in the end, more beguiling than its image. Through Feb. 10. ♦ **"Eleanore Mikus: From Shell to Skin."** Through Feb. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—Sam Samore, a photographer best known for his telephoto closeups of strangers on the street, shows black-and-white pictures from a self-portrait series called **"The Suicidist,"** which he initiated in 1973 and returned to only recently. In what appear to be crime-scene photographs, Samore pictures himself dead: under a car, at the bottom of a staircase, slumped next to a mess of pills. The project would be more macabre were some of the methods not so unlikely; falling off a children's playground ride or sucking on a vacuum-cleaner hose are more effective as comedy routines than as suicide attempts. But, like Cindy Sherman, Samore compresses narrative to a still so powerfully charged that it defies disbelief. Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Katrín Sigurdardóttir: High Plane Five."** Through May 7. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Stan Douglas: Inconsolable Memories."** Through March 18. ♦ **"Africa Comics"** gathers original drawings for a very wide range of strikingly adept cartoon fiction from twenty countries, most in French or English. Themes of social injustice and civic betterment predominate, indicating cultures in which romance, comedy, and fantasies of individual heroism have scant purchase. A sense of angry and aspiring collective dynamism suffuses the show. Through March 18. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

"FAIRY TALE, MYTH, AND FANTASY: APPROACHES TO SPIRITUALITY IN ART"
This exhibition takes a broad approach to spirituality, presenting organized religion alongside artists' interpretations. Ancient religion and myth are alluded to in a color lithograph by Chagall, "Four Tales from the Arabian Nights," from 1948, while Lovis Corinth's "Alexander and Diogenes" (1894) conjures the Greeks, and works by Kiki Smith, Georges Rouault, Emil Nolde, Alfred Kubin, Oskar Kokoschka, and others give an idiosyncratic spin to Christianity. The inclusion of Henry Darger and late-thirties drawings and cells from the Walt Disney studios might seem to be a stretch, but they're apt reminders that spirituality can come in all shapes and guises. Through Feb. 3. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 212-245-6734.)

Short List

DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY: Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868. Through Feb. 24. **ELIO CIOL:** Cohen Amador, 41 E. 57th St. 212-759-6740. Through Jan. 27. **MARILYN MINTER:** Salon 94, at 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212. Through Jan. 20. **FRED SANDBACK:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through Jan. 20. **SAUL STEINBERG:** Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338. Through Feb. 10.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ADAM BARTOS
"Eloquent" used to be what American landscape photographs were called when it was still possible to believe in magnificence and grandeur. "Mute" would describe most contemporary landscape work, which has almost entirely abandoned the grand vista for cramped views of the built environment, but that doesn't mean it can't speak to us. The color photographs that Bartos took in Los Angeles at the end of the nineteen-seventies, eleven of which are here, are so far from picturesque that they feel like sly provocations. But these truncated shots of empty suburban streets, scruffy patches of lawn, blank walls, and parked cars are naggingly familiar. Bartos looks long and hard at what we no longer see. Through Jan. 20. (Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370.)

TIM EITEL
Take any mundane human scene—a group of children in a museum, a couple rolling their luggage behind them, a homeless man pushing his load down the street—and remove it from its surroundings. Now place the figures in a dark, grayscale environment. The results could be architectural or vaguely apocalyptic. What does that do to our perception of space and human activity? Such is the question

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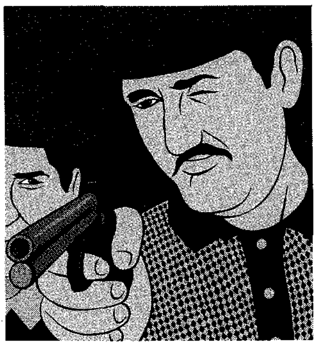
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
HE CAN'T REFUSE

Antonio Badalamenti (Alberto Sordi) is every inch the modern Sicilian. He is organized and forward-looking; he is married to a blonde from Bellagio (Norma Bengell), and they have two blond daughters; he lives in Milan and works as a foreman at a Fiat plant. But the call of home is strong, and, when Antonio drags the family back to his native village for a vacation, the loyalties of the past rise up to consume him. "Mafioso," Alberto Lattuada's comedy from 1962, which was recently showcased at the New York Film Festival in a restored version that will play in revival at the Angelika and at Lincoln Plaza starting Jan. 19, clamors for rediscovery. Filmed in a hot and bleached black-and-white, it manages to swerve from culture-clashing farce to alarming suspense without losing control; admirers of the Corleones, or, indeed, of Tony Soprano, will revel in the fleshy, pontifical presence of Don Vincenzo (Ugo Attanasio), the head of the local Mafia. The small favor that he asks of the fawning Antonio is the movie's big surprise; if you give it away, the Don will not be happy.

—*Anthony Lane*



posed by these works, by a pedigreed painter who studied in the burg *plus ultra* of contemporary painting, Leipzig. The twist on Gerhard Richter grays and the Photo-Realist adherence to everyday life aside, there's not much here to engender great excitement. Through Jan. 20. (PaceWildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000.)

JENNY PERLIN / PETER WELZ
In the seventies, a lawyer named Marshall Perlin forced the government to declassify F.B.I. surveillance files pertaining to the case against Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. Now archived at Columbia University, the Perlin Papers are the basis for a film-and-animation diptych by the artist Jenny Perlin, a distant relative of Marshall. "Transcript" re-creates a covertly recorded dinner conversation in which two couples in a Greenwich Village flat discuss testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Perlin hired actors to perform the text, which we hear while the camera lingers on a dingy marble hallway in an apartment building. The animation scrolls through a re-creation of the transcript itself, which mostly reads "inaudible." It's a fascinating and timely project, but, unfortunately, it sounds more interesting than it looks. The same could be said for Welz's collaboration with the choreographer William Forsythe, which "transcribes," in installation and video, a phrase from Samuel Beckett. Through Feb. 10. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793.)

JOHN WESLEY
Few artists would think of taking on the hapless suburban comic-strip character Dagwood Bumstead as an alter ego, but Wesley is not your typical painter. While he's often described as a Pop artist, Wesley's biggest early supporter was, of all people, the ur-minimalist Donald Judd. A roundup of Bumstead paintings from 1974 to the present not only showcases Wesley's ability to insert Chic Young's iconic character into a wild variety of situations and complex compositions but also conveys a surprising emotional range. "Dagwood Wave Dancer" finds our hero duplicated, like a wallpaper motif, across the canvas. "Utamaro Washing, Bumstead Sleeping" conflates the flatness of Japanese prints and comics, while narrative license and an unexpected erotic turn appear in "First Kiss: Blondie Bumstead and Ynez Sanchez." Through Feb. 10. (Fredericks & Freiser, 536 W. 24th St. 212-633-6555.)

Short List

ROZ CHAST: Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410. Through Feb. 10. **JACK HALLBERG / MIGUEL LUCIANO:** Cue, 511 W. 25th St. 212-206-3583. Through Jan. 27. **ROBERT IRWIN:** PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-929-7000. Through Jan. 27. **ELLSWORTH KELLY:** Marks, 523 W. 24th St., 522 W. 22nd St., and 526 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through Jan. 27. **ANDREW MOORE:** Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610. Through Jan. 27. **DAN PETERMAN:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through Jan. 20.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

HADY SY
Nearly all the big, unframed photographs in Sy's show are adapted from X-rays of the artist himself, and in several of them he looms before us as a life-size skeleton: a commanding, terrifying figure isolated against a solid black or white background. The work deals both explicitly and metaphorically with issues of race, war, religious belief, and gun violence, and has the impact of classic propaganda: sharp, unnerving, and graphically concise. For Sy, the skeletal figure is both life and death—the transcendent soul and a robotic, gun-wielding menace, each struggling for the upper hand. Through Jan. 20. (Ethan Cohen, 18 Jay St. 212-625-1250.)

"CLIP, STAMP, FOLD: THE RADICAL ARCHITECTURE OF LITTLE MAGAZINES, 196X-197X"
With artifacts encased in Plexiglas pods and a densely informative chronology laid out on a wavy screen of translucent plastic, "Clip, Stamp, Fold" works like a mod time capsule, taking us back to those heady days when Marxist polemic could come packaged in fake fur. From *Internationale Situationiste*, with its colored-foil covers, to the onionskin *Architext*, more than seventy little magazines with international origins are displayed, along with pamphlets, instructional manuals, and industry publications "that experienced moments of littleness." Looping audio interviews, plus a program of public talks, put it all in context. Through Jan. 31. (Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 212-431-5795.)

Short List

RYAN MCGINLEY: Team, 83 Grand St. 212-279-9219. Through Feb. 10. **HELEN MIRRA:** Freeman, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-5154. Through Jan. 20.

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

ADAM WEEKLEY
The centerpiece of Weekley's installation is a giant, silky sleeping bag, lined with blood-red fabric and connected like a tunnel to an enormous padded jewelry box. Installed beside a retro photographic mural of autumn woods, this psychosexual contraption suggests a fairy tale furnished by a modish Bedford Avenue boutique. The companion piece is a knitted hat, "Dreaming Cap," tethered by red ribbons to a flock of wall-mounted birdhouses, which have doll-house dioramas inside. One imagines the mise en scène used as party furniture by pretty people in outlandish clothes. Through Jan. 22. (Black & White, 483 Driggs Ave. 718-599-8775.)

"WEAK FOUNDATIONS"
Toxic spills in Williamsburg, shoddy curtain walls in Singapore, the burning Bronx, and the red dust of an abandoned African village—there's a slumlord or a shady deal behind them all. At least, that's the allegation in this grouping of small-scale Photo-Conceptualist projects made by fourteen different people in the course of more than twenty years. Caitlin Masley's simple sculptures—knee-high skyscrapers made from cutout and taped-together photographs, which the viewer is free to move around like toy blocks—stand out, as does Camilo José Vergara's shot of a methadone clinic that cheerily calls itself NarcoFreedom Inc. With works by Michael Ashkin, Jennifer Dalton, Martha Rosler, and David Scher, among others. Through Jan. 22. (Momenta, 359 Bedford Ave. 718-218-8058.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The company dives into the heart of its winter repertory season, which this year has been organized into eleven distinct, rotating programs. The current week features three, composed thematically: "Stravinsky and Balanchine: An Eternal Partnership," "Tradition and Innovation," and "Jerome Robbins: An American Icon." In the second, two Balanchine Tchaikovsky ballets—"Mozartiana" and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2"—coexist intriguingly with "In Vento," a moody piece made for the company last year by Mauro Bigonzetti (the director of Italy's Aterballetto). And Robbins comes ever more into his own with revivals of his "2 and 3 Part Inventions" and "A Suite of Dances," the solo he made for Baryshnikov in 1994. Casts appear on the company's Web site one week in advance. ♦ Jan. 17 and Jan. 23 at 7:30 and Jan. 18 at 8: "Mozartiana," "In Vento," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." ♦ Jan. 19 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 2: "Agon," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," "Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Duo Concertant," and "Symphony in Three Movements." ♦ Jan. 20 at 8 and Jan. 21 at 3: "2 and 3 Part Inventions," "A Suite of

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

Dances," "In Memory of . . .," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through Feb. 25.)

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
Coming off a triumphant twenty-fifth-anniversary season, the company greets the New Year as few companies can, by quietly performing in its own building. A première by Morris to Bach's "Italian Concerto" headlines a program that also includes "The Argument," a look at three couples in turmoil; "Sang Froid," a game of Red Rover set to Chopin; and a paean to communal bonds, "Love Song Waltzes." (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 212-352-3101. Jan. 17-20 at 7:30. Through Jan. 27.)

YOSHIKO CHUMA & THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
Chuma's "A Page Out of Order: M" is a world première, but its elements—giant metal-framed cubes, war themes, superb dancers—are the ones she's been using since 1999. Obscure meanings flicker in every image, whether it's a clip from Milcho Manchevski's 1994 movie "Before the Rain" or a dancer's silhouette moving across a white fabric panel. Traditional Macedonian and Japanese musicians play an original score, and the Japanese singer Sizzle Ohtaka narrates in the *benshi* style. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Jan. 16-20 at 7:30.)

JAPANESE CONTEMPORARY DANCE SHOWCASE
In its tenth year, Japan Society's annual sampler continues to provide a unique window onto the lively and strange contemporary-dance scene in Japan. In the first of two anniversary programs at the Joyce, Noism07 gives its sleek take on the notion of female dancers as manipulated mannequins, while Kim Itoh, the bad boy of Butoh, presents a serious-satirical look at the line between life and death. In the second, the Leni-Basso troupe shows unusual skill in the fusing of different media, and Pappa Tarahumara does Chekhov's "Three Sisters" as a Japanese Three Stooges. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Jan. 16-17 at 7:30, Jan. 18-19 at 8, Jan. 20 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

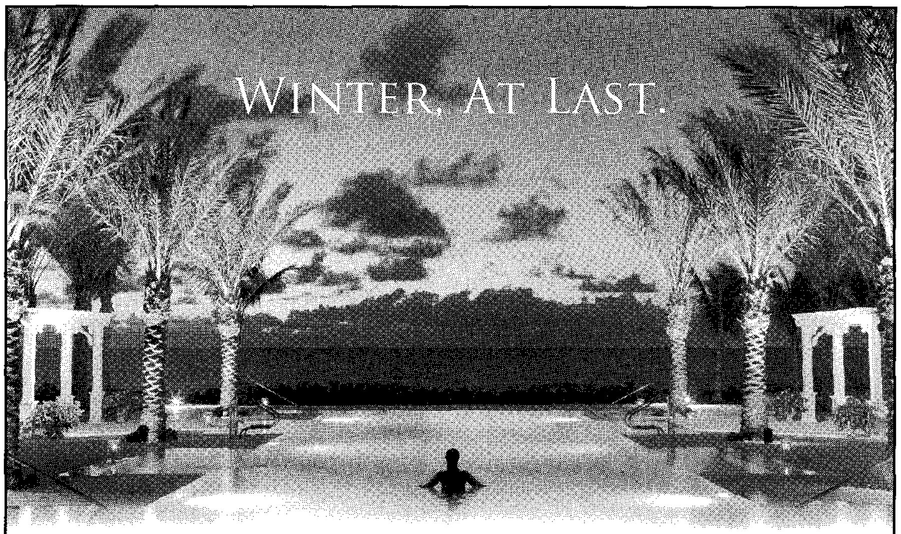
JEREMY WADE
Wade, now based in Berlin, presents his raw, nude duet from last year, "Glory" (one of the *Times* critic John Rockwell's top ten picks of 2006), and a new solo, "Feed," at P.S. 122. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Jan. 17, Jan. 19, and Jan. 23 at 6, and Jan. 18, Jan. 20, and Jan. 22 at 8:30.)

"FAKER"
The Minneapolis-based choreographer Morgan Thorson brings a wry sense of humor to her dance-theatre tale of two fraught eccentrics—an obsessive-compulsive and an Elvis impersonator—experiencing crises on a rehearsal stage. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Jan. 17 and Jan. 21 at 7:30, Jan. 19 and Jan. 23 at 9:30, and Jan. 20 and Jan. 22 at 5.)

TRISHA BROWN
The postmodern dance pioneer marks her seventieth birthday with a new piece, "I Love My Robots," commissioned by Montclair State University. In it, Brown collaborates with the Japanese artist and theorist Kenjiro Okazaki, who has created a sculptural performance space that delimits and channels the movement of the dancers; the music is by Laurie Anderson. Brown's company will also perform her fluid tour de force "Set and Reset" (1983) and "How Long Does the Subject Linger on the Edge of the Volume . . . " (2005). (Alexander Kasser Theatre, 1 Normal Ave., Montclair, N.J. 973-655-5112. Jan. 18 and Jan. 20 at 7:30 and Jan. 21 at 3.)

COMPAGNIE MARTINE PISANI
The Parisian choreographer Martine Pisani's "Bande à Part," presented by Danspace Project, looks like playtime in an insane asylum. As some performers take turns engaging in random-seeming behavior, others look on, making noises. Some bits are silly, but the bulk isn't played for laughs. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Jan 18 and Jan. 20-21 at 8:30.)

CEDAR LAKE CONTEMPORARY BALLET
The company, backed by a Wal-Mart heiress, carries on its mission of nurturing young American



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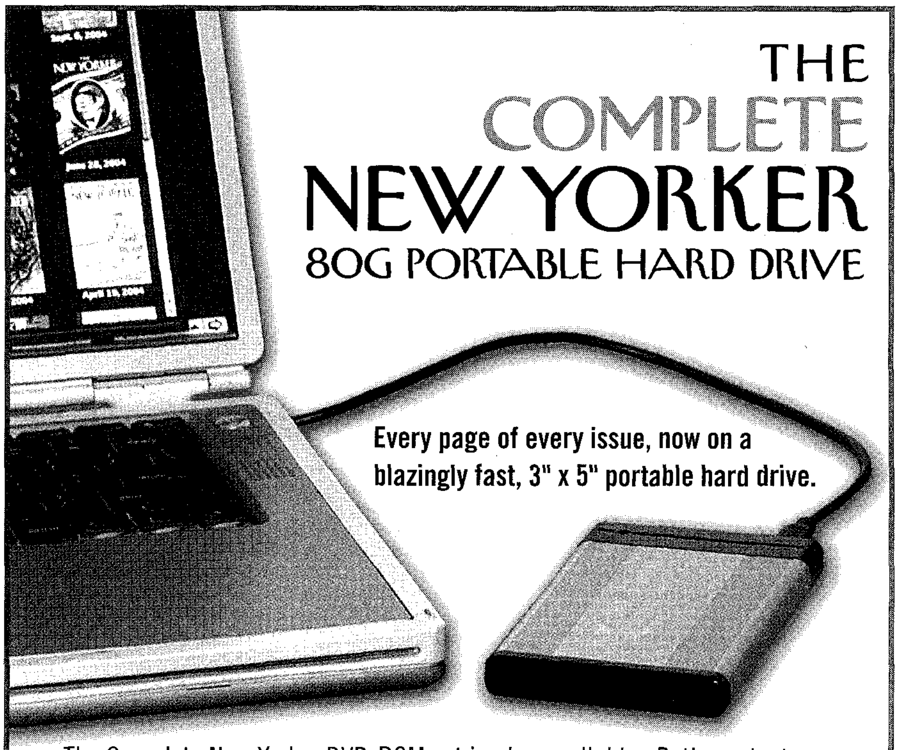
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choreographers and introducing American audiences to established but unfamiliar European dancemakers. "Symptoms of Development," by the William Forsythe disciple Jacopo Godani, is a tiresomely dystopian vision executed with engagingly explosive force. Also on the program at the company's Chelsea theatre are works by the Mexican-born dancemaker Edgar Zendejas and the company's artistic director, Benoit-Swan Pouffer. (547 W. 26th St. 212-868-4444. Jan. 18-19 and Jan. 21-22 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 2 and 8. Through Jan. 27.)

RUTH CANSFIELD DANCE
The Winnipeg-based contemporary-dance troupe makes its New York début with a program of three contrasting works by Cansfield, set to music by Rachmaninoff, Debussy, and George Crumb. (Merce Cunningham Studio Theatre, 55 Bethune St. 866-405-5810. Jan. 19-21 at 9.)

LAURA PETERSON CHOREOGRAPHY
Peterson's "I Love Dan Flavin" is delicious retro kitsch—but hard to take for forty-five minutes. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 212-219-0736. Jan. 19-20 and Jan. 26-27 at 8.)

DIAVOLO
Jacques Heim, the French choreographer behind Cirque du Soleil's "KÀ," brings his Los Angeles-based troupe to New York for the first time since 2001, in an evening of repertory favorites that reveal his knack for fusing airy acrobatics with witty dance theatre. (Walt Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts. 718-951-4500. Jan. 20 at 8.)

"DANCE GOTHAM"
To coincide with the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' yearly conference, the management firm Zia Artists has organized a showcase for the ten contemporary-dance companies it represents, which include Johannes Wieland, Keigwin & Company, and Battleworks. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Jan. 20-21 at 8.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
The Met begins an abbreviated week of offerings with a performance of Tan Dun's **"The First Emperor,"** an epic tale of ancient China, directed by Zhang Yimou, in which Plácido Domingo takes the title role. Also with the estimable Sarah Coburn, Paul Groves, and Michelle DeYoung; Tan, an experienced and incisive conductor, is on the podium. (Jan. 22 at 8.) ♦ A revival of the durable Zeffirelli production of "La Traviata," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Wookyung Kim, and Charles Taylor in the leading roles; Carlo Rizzi. (Jan. 23 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK: "OTELLO"
No, not that one—it's Rossini's commendable bel-canto effort from 1816, which sets all the action in Venice (and which has notoriously demanding tenor parts). Not heard in New York since 1968, it is now taken up by Eve Queler's invaluable organization; Bruce Ford sings the title role, with Ruxandra Donose as Desdemona and Robert McPherson as Jago. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 17 at 7:30.)

ROBERT ASHLEY'S "CONCRETE"
The great Midwestern maverick's latest multimedia speech-opera has its world première at La Mama Annex; the cast includes such Ashley stalwarts as Thomas Buckner, Jacqueline Humbert, and Joan La Barbara. (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Jan. 17-21 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Riccardo Muti, a favorite conductor of both the Philharmonic's players and its audience, leads the kind of program he has been admirably delivering for decades: Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (with Vadim Repin) and Scriabin's Symphony No. 3, "The Divine Poem." (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Jan. 18 at 7:30, Jan. 19 at 2, and Jan. 20 at 8.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY
Two spirited symphonies—Mozart's No. 35, "Haffner," and Honegger's No. 4, "Delights of Basel"—surround a performance of Villa-Lobos's Harmonica Concerto (with the virtuoso soloist Robert Bonfiglio) in the conductor George Rothman's latest program with his intrepid freelance orchestra. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Jan. 20 at 7:30.)

"REQUIEM FOR DARFUR"
George Mathew, a young conductor of tireless idealism, has brought together musicians from such ensembles as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Emerson String Quartet, and the New York Philharmonic (including its concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow) for a performance of Verdi's Requiem at Carnegie Hall, which will benefit humanitarian efforts in Darfur and Chad. (212-247-7800. Jan. 22 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
With Christoph Eschenbach leaving the music director's post at the end of next season, opportunities to hear him with his still sumptuous band are now limited. The formidable Thomas Quasthoff sings Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder" with them before a performance of Bruckner's awesome Ninth Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 23 at 8.)

RECITALS

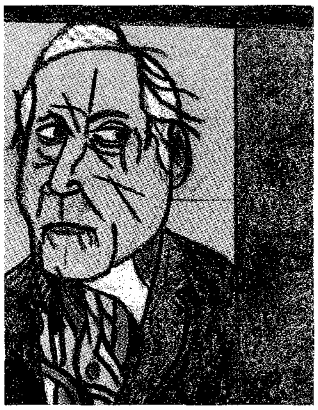
AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM: "MOSTLY OPERETTA"
The Forum's intimate blond-wood concert hall will be the venue for a festival celebrating the "Silver Era" composers of that authentically Viennese art form; sophisticated visual contributions by Victoria Coeln will add some theatrical atmosphere. All concerts are at 7. Jan. 15-16: An all-Lehár program, including several lieder and piano pieces. ♦ Jan. 18-19: Music by Kálmán, Lehár, Friml, and Fall. ♦ Jan. 20 and Jan. 25: A diversion to the music of Kurt Weill, one of the genre's most audacious rebels (featuring songs from his Broadway period). ♦ Jan. 22-23: Songs by Stolz, Lehár (including "Vilja-Lied"), and Oscar Straus. (11 E. 52nd St. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300.)

"CONCERTS IN THE HEIGHTS"
Washington Heights, long a redoubt for classical musicians, boasts an increasingly worthy concert scene. In this series's latest event, the fine young baritone Alexander Hurd, with friends, offers songs for voice and string quartet by Barber ("Dover Beach"), Respighi, Ives, and Paul Brantley (a première). (Fort Washington Collegiate Church, Fort Washington Ave. at 181st St. Jan. 17 at noon and Jan. 19 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Jan. 17 at 7:30: The Society hosts a concert by the Daedalus String Quartet, part of CMS Two and one of the freshest and most exciting of the younger American ensembles; its members offer quartets by Debussy, Dutilleux, and Beethoven (the grand A Minor, Op. 132). ♦ Jan. 21 at 5 and Jan. 23 at 7:30: "Pianos/Pianists" is a chance for the Society to showcase every one of its fine keyboardists (including Gilbert Kalish, Anne-Marie McDermott, and the organization's founder, Charles Wadsworth); they will dig into works for one and two pianos by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Fauré (the "Dolly" Suite), Stravinsky ("The Rite of Spring"), and Lutoslawski. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG: "SONGS OF PEACE AND WAR"
Steven Blier's resilient festival, which promotes some of the city's finest young singers, takes account of current events with a slate of songs by Poulenc, Barber, Weill (the scathing "Petroleum Song"), Rachmaninoff, Adam Guettel, and the Gershwins. (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, Lincoln Center. Jan. 17 at 8. Free tickets, which are required, are available at the Juilliard box office.)

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
JUST FOLKS



The experimental opera composer Robert Ashley has delved so deep into the mechanics of Midwestern American conversation that he has discovered an unknown continent of strange emotion in it. One of the originators of multimedia performance art, Ashley works as much with words as with tones, delivering meandering monologues in a hypnotic deadpan over softly enveloping instrumental, vocal, and electronic textures. You might think of him as the world's mellowest rapper, except that he has been working this way since the sixties. His latest opera, "Concrete," plays Jan. 17-21 at La Mama. It offers the remembrances of a nameless old man who tells stories of nameless others; a team of vocalists, including Thomas Buckner and Joan La Barbara, sing and chant the memories. In some ways, Ashley is the musical counterpart of David Lynch, a detective of weird secrets amid everyday life, but he's a gentler, more compassionate spirit. All his work has an elegiac quality, saving unexamined lives from oblivion.

—*Alex Ross*

BARGEMUSIC
Jan. 18-19 at 7:30: The pianist Jon Klibonoff, admired as the pianist of the vibrant Trio Solisti, goes it alone in works by Ravel, Brahms (Four Piano Pieces, Op. 119), and Rachmaninoff, as well as the inevitable Schubert sonata (in B-Flat Major, D. 960). ♦ Jan. 20 at 7:30 and Jan. 21 at 4: The Enso String Quartet, an excellent young foursome, essays works by Mozart (the Quartet in D Minor, K. 421), Ginastera, and Dvořák (the Quartet in E-Flat Major, Op. 51). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Jan. 19 at 8: In the past decade, the Anglo-Hungarian Takács Quartet (with their recently appointed American violist, Geraldine Walther) has gone from respectable to indispensable. In its only New York appearance of the season, the group performs works by Debussy, Shostakovich (the nimble Quartet No. 11 in F Minor), and Beethoven (the Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132). ♦ Jan. 21 at 3: The young Russian pianist Kirill Gerstein—who, in addition to having classical schooling, was a protégé of the jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton—offers a bravura program of works by Haydn, Schumann (the "Humoresque"), Liszt, Busoni, and Tchaikovsky (the crackling Scherzo from the Sixth Symphony, arranged by Samuel Feinberg). (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949.)

TOKYO STRING QUARTET
The 92nd Street Y's quartet-in-residence joins some friends for a program celebrating the music of Schumann and the writings of Heine, including performances of the String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1, and "Dichterliebe" (with the baritone Russell Braun), as well as readings of Heine's poetry and prose (by the actor Paul Hecht). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Jan. 20 at 8.)

MILLER THEATRE COMPOSER PORTRAIT: EDGARD VARÈSE
Columbia University's hip uptown series offers a tribute to the French-American renegade, whose technique of slamming sounds together like architectural blocks was just as influential as the innovations of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. The expert young players of Alarm Will Sound will take on several masterworks, including "Octandre," "Ionisation," and "Intégrales." (Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Jan. 20 at 8.)

DANIEL BARENBOIM
Barenboim, a true Romantic intellectual, plays the preludes and fugues of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" like miniature tone poems full of mystery, energy, and color. He marks the fiftieth anniversary of his Carnegie Hall début by playing Books I and II in succession. (212-247-7800. Jan. 20 at 8 and Jan. 21 at 2.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES
Members of the orchestra offer a Latin-tinged program of chamber works by Piazzolla, Lalo Schifrin ("La Nouvelle-Orléans"), and Korngold (the expansive String Sextet) at Merkin Concert Hall. (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Jan. 21 at 3.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The Jens Nygaard tribute ensemble, dedicated to music from the edges of the repertory, explores early works by Debussy (the Piano Trio in G Major), Brod, and Widor (the Piano Quintet in D Minor). The pianist Ilya Itin is a guest artist. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Jan. 22 at 2 and 7:30.)

MOVIES OPENING

ALONE WITH HER
Eric Nicholas directed this drama, about a man who installs hidden cameras in the home of a woman he wants to seduce. Starring Colin Hanks and Jordana Spiro. Opening Jan. 17. (IFC Center.)

THE HITCHER
A remake of the 1986 thriller about a hitchhiking couple whom a serial killer frames for his murders. Directed by Dave Meyers; starring Sean Bean and Sophia Bush. Opening Jan. 19. (In wide release.)

THE ITALIAN
A drama, directed by Andrei Kravchuk, about the attempted illegal adoption of a Russian boy by an Italian family. In Russian. Opening Jan. 19. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

MAFIOSO
A reissue of Alberto Lattuada's 1962 comedy, about a factory foreman (Alberto Sordi) who is drawn into the Mob. In Italian. Opening Jan. 19. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

REGULAR LOVERS
Reviewed below in Now Playing. In French. Opening Jan. 19. (Cinema Village.)

RICHARD MERKIN

NOW PLAYING

ABDUCTION: THE MEGUMI YOKOTA STORY
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Cinema Village.)

CHARLOTTE'S WEB
A blend of live action and computer animation, this adaptation of the classic children's novel by E. B. White, a longtime contributor to this magazine, is inoffensive but uninspired. As Fern, the farm girl who rescues a runt piglet and makes it her pet, Dakota Fanning is self-consciously cute, and the director, Gary Winick, seems far more interested in the actors who lend their voices to the animated animals, including Dominic Scott Kay as Wilbur the pig, Julia Roberts as Charlotte the spider, and Steve Buscemi as Templeton the rat. These computerized creatures are given the Hollywood frat-house style of snappy dialogue that is endemic to recent children's films but utterly alien to White's homespun world, and the farmers' lives and livelihoods, developed with such fine texture in the book, are here reduced to generic picture postcards. Even adulterated and underpowered, however, the story provides a kick: who can keep a dry eye during Wilbur and Charlotte's farewell?—*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

CHILDREN OF MEN
The Britain of 2027, as prophesied by Alfonso Cuarón in his new film, looks ominously close to the Britain of today—crowded, gray, and anxious. Two new crises have arisen: first, immigrants are being rounded up and caged like beasts, and, second, nobody, either in Britain or elsewhere, is able to give birth. The world is infertile, and therefore doomed; when a young woman becomes pregnant, everybody wants a piece of her. Into this crisis comes the weary Theo (Clive Owen), who is asked by an old girlfriend (Julianne Moore) to guide the expectant mother to freedom through a landscape of tribulation and trial. Cuarón gives us no time to ruminate on the credibility of his setup, quickening the pace until we are caught in a breathless running battle between dissenters and government troops. The film, based on a novel by P. D. James, is neither likable nor heartening; nor, despite the rapture of the child's birth, does it feel like the bringer of good news. Yet the fierceness of the storytelling exerts an unbroken grip, and there is leavening, of a sort, from Michael Caine, who plays a joint-puffing hippie in the woods—the last happy man in the world.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/8/07.) (In wide release.)

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
Though Zhang Yimou's opulent visual feast is set to a slower tempo than is his movie "Hero," from 2002, it's just as luxuriously over the top. The film, set in tenth-century China, stars Chow Yun-Fat and Gong Li as the rulers of the Royal Court, whose myriad twisted intrigues and betrayals lead to a bloody fight for succession among their three heirs. The opening scenes have a bold, Busby Berkeley-like style, as crowds of people prepare in unison for a day of servitude, but, as alliances are made and secrets are revealed, the film soon slows to a more Shakespearean pace. Zhang's action scenes are impeccable, especially his wire-work staging of an attack on a governor's residence. Although the story doesn't pack as powerful a punch as the visuals, the tragic pageantry is nonetheless compelling.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

DREAMGIRLS
Bill Condon's adaptation of the 1981 Broadway musical, the barely disguised tale of Berry Gordy and the rise of the Supremes, in the sixties, has an irresistible momentum. There are written expository passages and photomontages chronicling the events of the period, but just about everything else is sung. The

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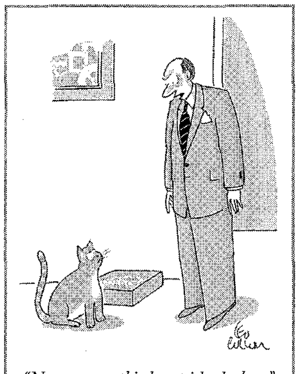
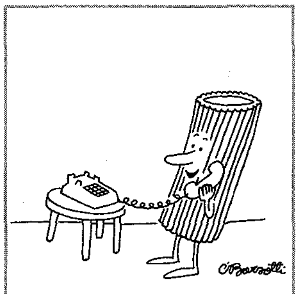


"Never, ever, think outside the box."

Leo Cullum, 1998



"Fusilli, you crazy bastard! How are you?"

Charles Barsotti, 1994

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songs aren't commentary on the drama; they *are* the drama. The three women in the original group are played by Anika Noni Rose, Beyoncé Knowles, and Jennifer Hudson, who, as the oversized Effie, doesn't fit—she has a big, soulful voice and an even bigger mouth. She's thrown out but not forgotten, and Beyoncé, whom we had barely noticed at first, moves into the center of the movie. Based on that glamorous imp Diana Ross, she allows the Berry Gordy figure (Jamie Foxx) to dress her up as a swank mannequin but finally breaks free. In its way, the picture is a serious study of the issue of commercial packaging versus art.—*David Denby* (12/25/06 & 1/1/07) (In wide release.)

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Robert De Niro's film about the rise of the C.I.A., from a brilliantly constructed screenplay by Eric Roth, is a sombre but fascinating social history of the agency and a meditation on the themes of trust and betrayal. Matt Damon, giving a recessive performance in the manner of Al Pacino's work in "Godfather II," is Edward Wilson, a Yale Skull and Bones member who gets inducted into the O.S.S. in 1939; he then spends the war in London working with a charming but treacherous Kim Philby-type British agent (Billy Crudup) and winds up in Washington as the agency's head of counterintelligence during the early Cold War period. A precise, selfless, and stolid man who operates, for all his shrewdness, in a fog of suspicion, he can't—or won't—protect those closest to him. The movie, whose wide-spanning plot (covering twenty-two years) is the working embodiment of paranoia, turns into Wilson's tragedy.—*D.D.* (12/25/06 & 1/1/07) (In wide release.)

TABLES FOR TWO
BLT BURGER

470 Sixth Ave., between 11th and 12th Sts. (212-243-8226)—BLT, as most New Yorkers have come to learn, stands not for the bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich (memorably cited, along with Baked Alaska and lobster thermidor, as "queer food," in an essay on *Slate* several years ago) but for Bistro Laurent Tourondel. First came BLT Steak, then BLT Fish, then BLT Prime, and last year we got the most unlikely offshoot of all: all-beef patties via a chef trained by Claude Troisgros and Joël Robuchon.

Burgers, timeless as they may be, are the restaurant raison d'être du jour, as though space aliens, or Frenchmen, have concluded that the best way to colonize us is by cloning burger joints. Cinematic law dictates that there must always be a wrong note or two, a seam in the matrix, that gives away the contrivance, and at BLT Burger there are several: the ladies' room is stocked with unbeefy lit ("Cathy Uncovers a Secret," "The Gender Bias Prevention Book"); the music repeats itself (Frampton comes alive more than once an hour); and the menu offers spiked milkshakes, such as the Master Blaster, which consists of strawberry ice cream, coconut milk, and Mount Gay rum (you can be sure that Arthur Fonzarelli never ordered one at Al's). But authenticity may be overrated, and, anyway, BLT Burger gets the formula mostly right—chrome napkin dispensers, a giant Gulf Oil sign, and well-proportioned burgers served a certain way, unless you insist otherwise.

That way is medium rare/medium (which can apparently also mean well done or hardly done at all), fixed with mustard, mayonnaise, ketchup, pickles, onions, and L. and T. The buns are blessedly soft, plain, and white—no focaccia trickery. The patties are five ounces of Black Angus beef at the low end of the salt and fat range, which likely costs them a medal in the best-burger sweepstakes. There are salutary deviations, such as an ahi-tuna burger, dressed with spicy harissa mayo, which tastes a little like a margarita, and a lamb-merguez burger, which comes with cucumbers and yogurt sauce and is agreeably funky. A scouting party recently concluded that it would be wrong even to try the veggie burger or the Japanese Kobe burger, which costs $62, but, with regard to the spiked shakes, curiosity prevailed, and the consensus was that the Grandma's Treat—made with bourbon, naturally—was the least baked Alaska of the lot. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Burgers $7-$62.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

This sublime Japanese medieval adventure, released in 1958, renders a comedy of ethical equilibrium as a giant sixteenth-century civil-war epic. At the center is a righteous, ornery princess in disguise, piercing enemy lines to seek sanctuary in a friendly province, and a valiant, no-nonsense general (Toshiro Mifune) who sacrifices his own sister to protect her. But Akira Kurosawa tells the story from the perspective of two peasant helpers who hope only for a piece of her dynastic treasure and can't even be trusted to know her real identity. (George Lucas has acknowledged these antiheroes as being the inspiration for R2-D2 and C-3PO in "Star Wars.") Using wide-screen for the first time, Kurosawa turns his sprawling frames into kinetic tapestries of anarchy. His chases and duels boast the exaggerated choreography and ruthless movement that would influence Leone and Peckinpah. It's Mifune's most gloriously uncomplicated performance—in repose his conscience may haunt him, but in battle he rouses the innocent fervor of Fairbanks and Flynn at their best. In Japanese.—*Michael Sragow* (Sunshine Cinema; Jan. 19-20.)

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA

In the early scenes of Clint Eastwood's "Flags of Our Fathers," the Japanese Army, dug into caves and tunnels, lured the Americans far onto the beach by holding their fire. Now, in a unique reversal of perspective, we are inside the caves, and, cast among the Others, we find ourselves in the morally demanding but exhilarating position of rooting for them. Taken together with "Flags," this movie is a considerable act of ethical imagination, but it's not a great film. Both the defender of the island, General Kuribayashi (Ken Watanabe), and his friend and fellow-officer Baron Nishi (Tsuyoshi Ihara), an Olympic equestrian before the war, are such idealized figures—modest, gentle, and gallant—that they lose any serious interest as characters. The young Japanese soldier Saigo (Kazunari Ninomiya), a gentle baker who was conscripted into the Army and just wants to get back to his family, is meant to be a life-affirming presence among the death cultists, but, as constructed by the screenwriter, Iris Yamashita, he's a slight and bashful fellow who can't carry the philosophical weight that's been assigned to him. The movie was impressively, but also monotonously, shot by the cinematographer Tom Stern in the same style as "Flags of Our Fathers"—in a largely black-and-white palette, with occasional flashes of wine-dark blood or bits of orange flame. In Japanese.—*D.D.* (1/15/07) (In wide release.)

MISS POTTER

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

A harmless, juvenile comedy about a newly employed night watchman (Ben Stiller) at New York's Museum of Natural History who tries to calm the chaos that begins when some exhibits come to life. As directed by Shawn Levy, Stiller acts more annoyed than amused, but comic work by Owen Wilson and Robin Williams keeps the film moving along. There's no story to speak of (beyond finding the source of the trouble); the movie is merely a bunch of set pieces that serve as excuses for cool special effects.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

NOTES ON A SCANDAL

A sensationally nasty and perceptive entertainment about sexual obsession and class. Judi Dench is the sixty-five-ish Barbara, a desperately lonely but formidable teacher in a dreary North London comprehensive school; Cate Blanchett is Sheba, her protégée at the school, a comfortable married bohemian who teaches art and falls in love with a cheeky fifteen-year-old working-class student (Andrew Simpson). Patrick Marber has adapted Zoë Heller's novel, which was written entirely from Barbara's point of view, and the material has now been cast in the third person; the camera observes all the characters objectively while Barbara's acerbic, self-deceiving narration wickedly frames the action. The suspense builds mercilessly as the guileless Sheba, whose placid existence is threatened by her heedless love affair, falls into the clutches of her devouring older "friend." Philip Glass's swirling music presses the issue with unnecessary insistence. With Bill Nighy as Sheba's outraged husband. Directed by Richard Eyre.—*D.D.* (1/15/07) (In wide release.)

THE PAINTED VEIL

Marriage on the rocks, W. Somerset Maugham style. Set in nineteen-twenties China, the story concerns a stuffy bacteriologist (Edward Norton) who, after discovering that his flirty wife (Naomi Watts) is having an affair, signs them up to work in a Chinese province that is suffering from a cholera epidemic. The seeming joint-suicide pact of the characters is played out in hushed, uncommunicative scenes that have the power of penance, and Norton's and Watts's performances are mutely intelligent. But when the film works in the political uprisings of the time and the redemptive power of their volunteer work (he finds the source of the disease, she takes care of orphaned children), it never heats up, and becomes gently lulling instead. The director, John Curran, and the screenwriter, Ron Nyswaner, have varnished away any trace of a rough edge.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

PAN'S LABYRINTH

The Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, who made "The Devil's Backbone," digs deeper still into his chosen field of the political horror story. The new movie is set in 1944 in a rural Spanish backwater, where Ofelia (Ivana Baquero), a young girl of unnerving poise, travels to meet her new stepfather (Sergi López), who commands a military outpost. One question posed by the film is, Who is the monster here? Is it the stepfather, with his creaking gloves and his savage treatment of local republican troublemakers? Could it be Franco, who has brought the country to this pass? Or is it the creatures—a mixture of animal, vegetable, and alien—that Ofelia meets in a stone labyrinth, and under whose eyes she endures a series of harsh, not to say sadistic, challenges? At times, her adventures are hard to watch, and the whole film works at a pitch of violence that will shock admirers of more placid fantasy. The result is provoking, inventive, and clever to a fault; everything has been planned and thought through with such care that some of the spontaneity has been squeezed from the proceedings. If it lives and breathes, it is largely due to Lopez and to Álex Angulo, who is wonderful in the Chekhovian role of a good doctor. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (1/8/07) (In wide release.)

PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER

Patrick Süskind's best-smelling novel is finally brought to the screen, at inordinate length. Ben Whishaw plays the glowering Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, born among the fish stalls of eighteenth-century Paris, who follows his nose and becomes the assistant to a noted Italian perfumer (Dustin Hoffman). From here, our hero treks to the South of France, and, in a bid to create the perfect scent, kills a selection of young women, distilling the aroma of each. That in itself engenders a problem for the director, Tom Tykwer, who has to drag us through a roster of deaths, barely pausing to introduce the victims. The one exception is Laura (Rachel Hurd-Wood), whose father (Alan Rickman) does everything to protect her from the killer. Rickman and Hoffman recognize the tale for the rich, exotic nonsense that it is and offer ripe performances to match—unlike Whishaw, whose sniffing intensity turns the young devil into something of a humorless bore. Only toward the end does the absurdity bear fruit, as an entire French town succumbs to a mass orgy, laid bare by a whiff of the divine.—*A.L.* (In wide release.)

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
Will Smith gives an impressively grownup performance in this movie, based on the real-life experience of the African-American businessman Chris Gardner. Failing as a San Francisco medical-supply salesman in the Reagan eighties, Gardner risks all to enter a nonpaying training program at Dean Witter Reynolds, where only one of the twenty interns will be offered a position. His wife, fiercely played by Thandie Newton, leaves him and Chris, Jr. (nine-year-old Jaden Smith, Will's son). Father and son's living conditions descend steadily from apartment to motel to shelters to the streets. For a feel-good movie, it's pretty grim for much of the way, but the elder Smith's trademark flashes of humor and the soundtrack's classic Stevie Wonder songs leave little doubt that the resolution will be uplifting. Directed by Gabriele Muccino.—*Ken Marks* (In wide release.)

REGULAR LOVERS
Philippe Garrel, who, at the age of twenty, made a renowned film (now lost) in Paris during the turmoil of May, 1968, revisits those times in this intimate epic, which runs almost three hours. Centered on the love affair between François, a twentyish poet (played by Garrel's son Louis), and Lilie (Clotilde Hesme), a working-class sculptor, it brings to life four decades of Garrel's impacted thoughts in a drama that's as symbolic as it is realistic. He films the uprising with a flat theatrical abstraction, turning it into a dimly recalled dream. This is May '68 minus the politics—an outpouring of youthful desire, a yearning for sensual utopia on earth—and, as such, it's doomed. Though glimpsing paradise in fleeting moments (as when François watches a pulsing vein in the sleeping Lilie's neck), Garrel shows that the world that came after the revolt belongs to practical people with their feet on the ground. If someone other than the aesthetically radical Garrel said this, it might seem reactionary, but here it's a rueful retrospective gaze on Garrel's own sad youth and its illusions. The great William Lubtchansky's grainy black-and-white images have the feel of cold stone, and when the pragmatic Lilie challenges François to get on with his life the chill of hard reality is all the more brutal. In French.—*R.B.* (Cinema Village.)

SALESMAN
In this 1968 documentary, Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin capture the quiet desperation of a quartet of travelling Bible salesmen on the road in New England and Florida, as well as that of the poor souls they besiege with their spiel. The foot soldiers, pasty men ranging from early to late middle age, go by the nicknames the Bull, the Rabbit, the Gipper, and the Badger; the latter, Paul Brennan, is the heart of the film. The filmmakers spend plenty of time in his car and record his insightful perorations about his job and his colleagues—and it is precisely his detachment, his ability to step back and assess what he's doing, that renders him less successful and more frustrated in his ungratifying, predatory work. The Catholic Church, which lent its imprimatur to the overpriced tomes and provided the salesmen with their leads, has an unappealing offscreen role; but the onscreen villain is the hectoring sales manager, whose creed of total responsibility drives his staff to depressing self-punishment. If the filmmakers never let on how they got into houses with their equipment or what effect they had on the pitch, they nonetheless inspire empathy for all parties to this miserable commerce.—*R.B.* (Moving Image; Jan. 20.)

Also Playing

ALPHA DOG: In wide release. **THE DEAD GIRL:** In wide release. **ERAGON:** In wide release. **FREEDOM WRITERS:** In wide release. **STOMP THE YARD:** In wide release. **VERDICT ON AUSCHWITZ:** Quad Cinema.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—In première. Jan. 17-19 and Jan. 22-23 at 7 and Jan. 20-21 at 5 and 9: "The GoodTimesKid" (2005, Azazel Jacobs). ♦ Jan. 17-19 and Jan. 22-23 at 9 and Jan. 20-21 at 7: "Two Wrenching Departures" (2006, Ken Jacobs). ♦ "Audio Vérité." Interviews and sound works featuring Hollis Frampton, Michael Snow, Joyce Wieland, and Stan Brakhage. ♦ Special screenings. Jan. 19 at 7:30: Short films by Dudley Murphy (1920-29). ♦ Jan. 20 at 8: Short films by László Moholy-Nagy (1929-36). ♦ "Essential Cinema." Jan. 21 at 5:30: "Strike" (1925, Sergei Eisenstein; silent, with Russian intertitles).

Kolya Spiridonov stars in "The Italian."

DEWEY SAUNDERS

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Feb. 27: The films of Jean-Pierre Léaud. Jan. 23 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Treasure Island" (1985, Raoul Ruiz; in French).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Jan. 17-18 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Ace in the Hole" (1951, Billy Wilder). ♦ Through Jan. 25: "Tales of the Brothers Quay," short films (1984-2000, Stephen and Timothy Quay).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—Through Jan. 23: The films of Robert Altman. Jan. 17 at 1, 5:20, and 9:40: "Fool for Love" (1985). ♦ Jan. 17 at 3:15 and 7:35: "A Perfect Couple" (1979). ♦ Jan. 18 at noon, 4:10, and 8:30: "Countdown" (1968). ♦ Jan. 18 at 2:10, 6:20, and 10:30: "Brewster McCloud" (1970). ♦ Jan. 19 at 11:15 A.M., 1:50, 4:25, 7, and 9:35: "3 Women" (1977). ♦ Jan. 20 at 12:25, 5:10, and 9:55 and Jan. 21 at 9:55: "Buffalo Bill and the Indians" (1976). ♦ Jan. 20 at 2:55 and 7:40 and Jan. 21 at 7:40: "McCabe and Mrs. Miller" (1971). ♦ Jan. 21 at 11 A.M.: "Tanner '88," episodes 1-3 (1988). ♦ Jan. 21 at 1:10: "Tanner '88," episodes 4-7 (1988). ♦ Jan. 21 at 3:20: "Tanner '88," episodes 8-11 (1988). ♦ Jan. 21 at 5:30: "Tanner on Tanner" (2004). ♦ Jan. 22 at 12:30, 5:10, and 9:50: "Health" (1980). ♦ Jan. 22 at 2:45 and 7:25: "A Wedding" (1978). ♦ Jan. 23 at 12:20, 4:25, and 8:30: "Secret Honor" (1984). ♦ Jan. 23 at 2:20, 6:25, and 10:30: "Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean" (1982). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Jan. 19-20 at midnight: "El Topo" (1970, Alejandro Jodorowsky; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 19-20 at midnight: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" singalong: a musical episode of the television series, presented with a live cast.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through Jan. 28: "Global Lens, 2007." Jan. 17-18 and Jan. 22 at 6, Jan. 19 at 8, Jan. 20 at 2, and Jan. 21 at 4: "Dam Street" (2005, Li Yu; in Mandarin and Sichuan). ♦ Jan. 17 at 8: "Kilometre Zero" (2005, Hiner Saleem; in French, Kurdish, and Arabic). ♦ Jan. 18 at 8:30: "Fine Dead Girls" (2002, Dalibor Matanic; in Croatian). ♦ Jan. 19 at 6:15: "Another Man's Garden" (2006, Sol de Carvalho; in Portuguese). ♦ Jan. 20 at 4: Short films, including "A Little Bit Higher" (2005, Mehdi Jafari; in Farsi). ♦ Jan. 20 at 6: "Enough!" (2006, Djamila Sahraoui; in French and Arabic). ♦ Jan. 21 at 2: "The Sacred Family" (2005, Sebestián Campos; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 21 at 6: "A Wonderful Night in Split" (2004, Arsen Anton Ostojic; in Croatian and English). ♦ In revival. Jan. 18 at 8:30, Jan. 19 at 6, Jan. 20 at 5:30, Jan. 21 at 2, and Jan. 22 at 8: "Eraserhead" (1977, David Lynch). ♦ "Still Moving," films from the museum's collections. Jan. 19 at 4:30: "The Emperor Jones" (1933, Dudley Murphy). ♦ "Gaumont Presents." Jan. 20 at 2: "Don Giovanni" (1979, Joseph Losey; sung in Italian). ♦ "Ocularis at 10." Jan. 20 at 8:30 and Jan. 22 at 5: Short-film program, including "Nettezza Urbana" (1948, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Special screening. Jan. 19 at 7:30: "Cronos" (1993, Guillermo del Toro). ♦ Jan. 20-21 at 6: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti; in Italian). ♦ "Critics Choice: Great Documentaries." Jan. 20 at 3: "Salesman" (†), introduced by Matt Zoller Seitz and followed by a Q. & A. with Albert Maysles. ♦ Jan. 21 at 3: "Delivered Vacant" (1992, Nora Jacobson), introduced by Stuart Klawans.

PIONEER THEATRE
155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—In première. Jan. 17 at 7: "Ever Since the World Ended" (2001, Calum Grant and Joshua Atesh Litle). ♦ In revival. Jan. 18 and Jan. 21 at 6:45: "Four Corners of Suburbia" (2005, Elizabeth Puccini).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Jan. 19 at 9:30: "The Flowers of St. Francis" (1950, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." Jan. 19-20: "The Hidden Fortress" (†).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—In revival. Jan. 21 at 6: "Army of Shadows" (1969, Jean-Pierre Melville). ♦ Jan. 21 at 8:45 and Jan. 23 at 5:30 and 7:30: "Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles" (2006, Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Jan. 25: New York Jewish Film Festival. Jan. 17 at 1 and 8:30: "White Terror" (2005, Daniel Schweizer; in French, English, German, and Russian). ♦ Jan. 17 at 6: "The Rape of Europa" (2006, Richard Berge, Nicole Newnham, and Bonni Cohen; in English, German, Italian, and French). ♦ Jan. 18 at 1 and 6: "Toots" (2006, Kristi Jacobson). ♦ Jan. 18 at

3:15: "5 Days" (2005, Yoav Shamir; in Hebrew and English). ♦ Jan. 20 at 9:30, Jan. 21 at 8:30, and Jan. 22 at 8:15: "What a Wonderful Place" (2005, Eyal Halfon; in Hebrew, English, Russian, and Tagalog). ♦ Jan. 21 at 1:30: "The Cantor's Son" (1937, Ilya Motyleff and Sidney Goldin; in Yiddish). ♦ Jan. 21 at 6:30 and Jan. 22 at 6: "Matchmaker: In Search of a Kosher Man" (2005, Gabrielle Antosiewicz; in Swiss-German and French). ♦ Jan. 22 at 1:30: "Sonia" (2006, Lucy Kostelanetz). ♦ Jan. 22 at 4 and Jan. 23 at 1:30 and 6: "The Longing" (2006, Gabriela Bohm; in English and Spanish). ♦ Jan. 23 at 3:30 and 8: "Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School" (2005, Irena Feingold). ♦ A tribute to Forest Whitaker. ♦ Jan. 19 at 6: "Ghost Dog" (1999, Jim Jarmusch). ♦ Jan. 19 at 8:30: A conversation with Whitaker. ♦ Jan. 19 at 9:30 and Jan. 20 at 4: "The Last King of Scotland" (2005, Kevin Macdonald). ♦ Jan. 20 at 1: "Bird" (1988, Clint Eastwood).

READINGS AND TALKS

RICHARD A. CLARKE
The counterterrorism expert discusses his latest book, "Breakpoint," a techno-thriller set in 2012. (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary. Jan. 17 at 7:45.)

THE POETRY PROJECT
Kamau Brathwaite and Susan Howe read from their work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door. Jan. 17 at 8.)

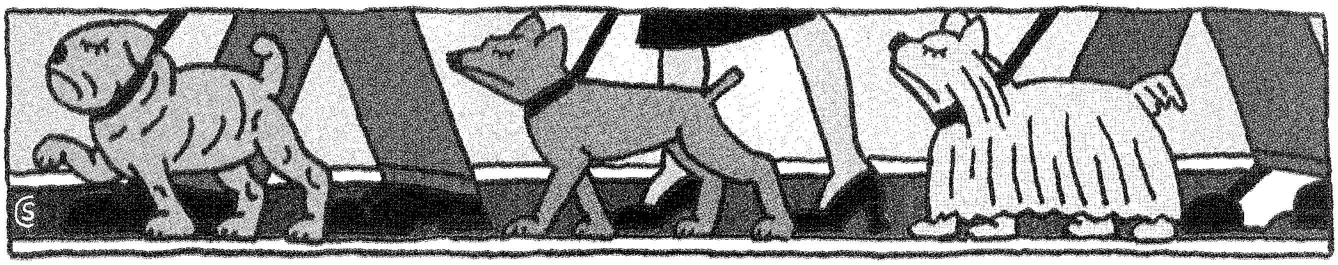
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
Jocelyn Kress's forefathers made a fortune with five-and-dime stores and then went on to amass one of America's largest collections of Old Master art works, much of which has been given away. On Jan. 18 at 6, she gives an inside look at her family and its legacy. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949.)

WALTER READE THEATRE
The actor Forest Whitaker, whose career has ranged from a small role in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," more than two decades ago, to his recent acclaimed performance as the dictator Idi Amin Dada in "The Last King of Scotland," talks about his work, in a program that also features clips from his films. A screening of "The Last King of Scotland" follows. (Lincoln Center. 212-875-5600. Jan. 19 at 8:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"MOBY-DICK: THE SERMON"
Early in Melville's novel, Ishmael, experiencing a "damp, drizzly November" in his soul, leaves the "insular city of the Manhattoes" and takes to the sea. But, before he ships out on the Pequod, he finds himself in church in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The preacher is Father Mapple, a former harpooner and sailor, who, after climbing a ship's rope ladder to his pulpit, delivers a fiery sermon about Jonah and the whale. For the past few months, on Saturday nights inside the chapel in Green-Wood Cemetery, the actor Richard Kirkwood has been treating present-day New Yorkers to a resounding rendition of the sermon. The performance, which includes hymns and music, has just been extended indefinitely. (Fifth Ave. at 25th St., Brooklyn. For information, call 718-857-4816. Jan. 20, starting at 7:30, and the second and third Saturdays of each month.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
With the New Year comes Americana Week at the auction houses. **Christie's** gets things started with sales running the gamut, from Chippendale furniture to folk art, silver, and prints (Jan. 18-19). One of the highlights in the folk-art category is a trio of paintings by the Quaker artist Edward Hicks, including the final version of his iconic "Peaceable Kingdom"; also on offer is a rare and elegant wooden Canada-goose decoy, one of the top lots from the collection of the distinguished AIDS researcher and folk-art enthusiast Alvin E. Friedman-Kien (Jan. 19). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Sotheby's** follows up with its own clutch of Americana sales, featuring an auction of silver and prints on Jan. 19, furniture and folk art from the collection of Susan and Mark Laracy on Jan. 20, and a mixed sale of pieces from the collection of Marc and Laurie Krasny Brown on Jan. 21. Among the furniture, a Chippendale mahogany desk-and-bookcase stands out for its carving, by the Boston artisan John Welch, and its provenance, having been commissioned by the American merchant and British loyalist Gilbert DeBlois. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ **Phillips** goes its own way with two selling exhibits, one of photographs by the young French-African artist Lucille Reyboz (through Jan. 26) and the other of video portraits by the theatre and opera director Robert Wilson (Jan. 17-Feb. 14). (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.) ♦ The **Winter Antiques Show** (Jan. 19-28), in its fifty-third season, sets up shop at the 7th Regiment Armory; more than seventy dealers will offer everything from Shaker furniture to rare books and armor. (Park Ave. at 67th St. 718-292-7392.)



The Westminster Kennel Club's annual All Breed Dog Show.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
BELLS AND WHISTLES
Feb. 1-26

Ennio Morricone is most famous for his scores for Sergio Leone's Westerns, but he has composed for everyone from Dario Argento to Oliver Stone to Brian De Palma. To coincide with a concert that he will conduct at Radio City on Feb. 3 (and to celebrate the honorary Oscar he'll be awarded later in the month), MOMA and Film Forum will offer programs of films with Morricone scores. (212-708-9480; 212-727-8110.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
KEYED UP
Feb. 1-3

The dynamic composer and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen will lead the New York Philharmonic, not only in works by Ravel and Mussorgsky but in the world première of his Piano Concerto (with Yefim Bronfman at the keyboard). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

THE THEATRE
SHOCK JOCK
Feb. 9

The monologuist and playwright Eric Bogosian performed the lead role in his play "Talk Radio" in its 1987 première, at the Public Theatre, and in Oliver Stone's film adaptation the following year. A "Talk Radio" revival, the first of Bogosian's plays to go to Broadway, will star Liev Schreiber. (212-239-6200.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
DOG DAYS
Feb. 12-13

The Westminster Kennel Club's annual All Breed Dog Show fills Madison Square Garden with Labrador retrievers, collies, dachshunds, affenpinschers, and scores of other breeds. (www.westminsterkennelclub.org.)

ART
IN THE FRAME
Feb. 21-27

Eve Sussman's "89 Seconds at Alcazar," a video re-creation of Velázquez's painting "Las Meninas," won the artist many fans at the 2003 Whitney Biennial. In her follow-up, "The Rape of the Sabine Women," Roman myth and Jacques-Louis David's painting are examined through a sixties glam aesthetic. Screenings at the IFC Center, on Sixth Avenue, will be free. (www.creativetime.org.)

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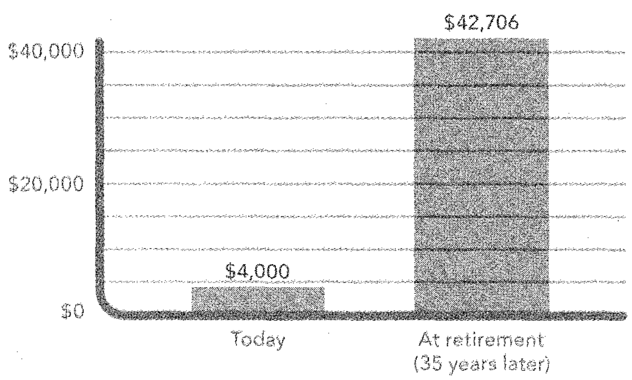

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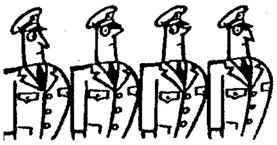
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
THE PLANNER



Watching George Bush's televised speech last week, when he revealed what he called "the main elements" of his plan to rescue Iraq, was like watching a slightly nervous lieutenant colonel read PowerPoint slides. There was an unmistakable presence of bullet points; the plan is not altogether clear, but it seems to involve two deputy Iraqi commanders in Baghdad, nine administrative districts, eighteen Iraqi brigades, a large number of neighborhood police stations, and, oh yes, the dispatch of twenty-one thousand five hundred additional American troops. In a sincere tone of voice, the President also announced a door-to-door campaign "to gain the trust of Baghdad residents."

Bush said that America's military commanders had assured him that "this plan can work"—an oddly hedged phrasing. It was one of several fudges in his text, which recalled some of the rhetorical tactics his Administration employed to build support for the disastrous invasion of Iraq, almost four years ago. The President implied, for example, that his escalation had been conceived to support "the new Iraqi plan" to bring security to Baghdad, when it is well established that Iraq's democratically elected Prime Minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, did not ask for any additional American troops and has agreed to accept them only under pressure. There were other tortured uses of language: Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that the plan was just a "temporary surge," but temporary, he continued, in the sense of having no fixed end.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

The President cowed Democrats in early 2003 by describing his choice then as a stark one between the invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein and a state of indefinite peril. He now claims that his opponents in Congress, who increasingly include members of his own party, face a choice between his "surge" and complete withdrawal from Iraq, with its attendant risk of chaos—more chaos, that is, than Bush's war has already created. Of course, as the bipartisan Iraq Study Group made clear in its report last month, there are many policy choices besides an increase of troops which do not entail a total military withdrawal in the foreseeable future.

As Bush prepared to announce his plan, the White House overruled dissenters at the Pentagon in a manner reminiscent of its management of intelligence about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction before the invasion. On November 15th, General John P. Abizaid, the commander of all American military forces in the Middle East, testified publicly to Congress that he did not see a need for more American troops in Iraq. He apparently changed his mind later; in any event, he announced his retirement just before Christmas. Around the same time, the Washington *Post* reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously opposed sending fifteen thousand or more troops to Iraq. There is no indication that the chiefs have all abandoned their doubts since then; they seem only to have agreed to follow orders. Gates told Congress late last week that the plan for more troops had originated with commanders in Iraq. But a short time later the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Peter Pace, testified that the commanders had requested considerably fewer troops than President Bush ultimately decided to send.

Presumably, the skepticism among uniformed officers is influenced by the numerous cases in recent military history, of diverse countries and diverse armies, which indicate that a counterinsurgency plan of the type Bush has embraced is very unlikely to succeed. The last British campaign in Northern Ireland was fought for three decades, and tens of thousands of

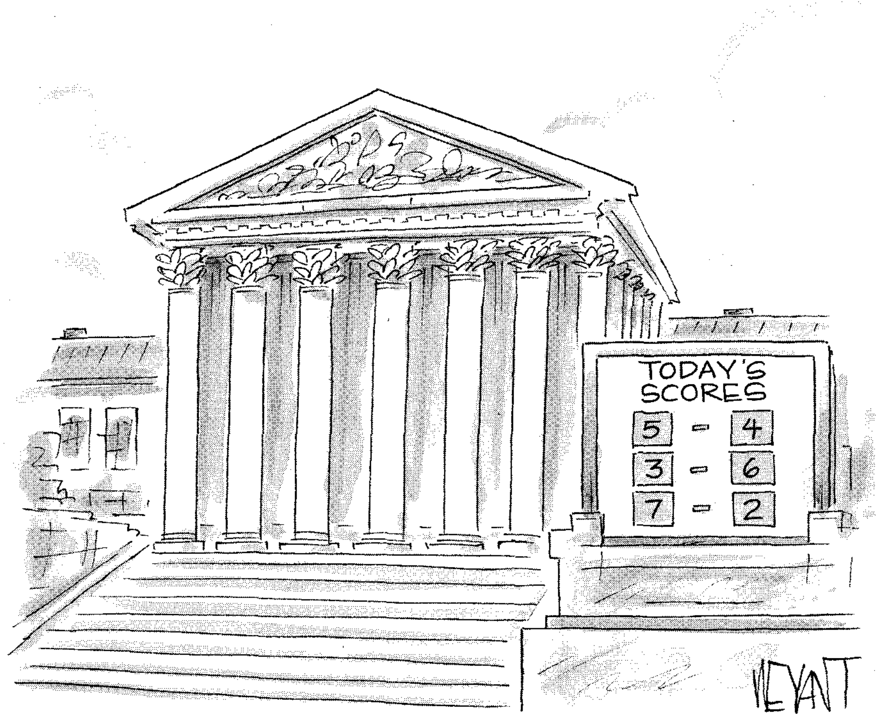
Russian troops are still trying to subdue Chechnya more than ten years after a rebellion erupted there—and these are examples involving the sovereign territory of the occupying army, not some distant land conquered by an expeditionary force. The stabilization of Bosnia by NATO troops is sometimes cited as a recent and exemplary success, but in that case all the warring parties had agreed to forswear violence before the occupying troops arrived, and, even so, the size of the NATO force, in comparison to the size of the local population, was considerably larger than the American force in Iraq will be after Bush's planned deployments. By none of the common measures of counterinsurgency doctrine—ratios of force size, the strength of local political agreements, or the credibility of the occupying army—does the President's plan look convincing.

Bush has appointed Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno to implement the new approach as the leader of day-to-day combat operations in Iraq. Odierno commanded the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq during 2003 and 2004; he oversaw the capture of Saddam Hussein. He also has a record of either misreading the war or glossing over its difficulties. Odierno said in the summer of 2003 that the Sunnis were "not close to guerrilla warfare" and that the enemy had no will to fight. Early in 2004, he declared at a news conference that the insurgents he was facing were a "fractured, sporadic threat" who had been reduced to just a "handful of cells." He said, "We see constant improvement. And so it is getting better."

In this Elizabethan milieu of flawed and ambitious men, none arrive onstage with more complex motivations than Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, whom Bush is sending to Iraq as Odierno's supervisor. Petraeus graduated from West Point the year before the fall of Saigon and later earned a doctorate in international relations from Princeton; the subject of his thesis was the hobbling impact of the Vietnam War on the uses of American military power. His most recent assignment was to rewrite the Army's counterinsurgency manual, which, amazingly, had not been updated in two decades. Petraeus is one last Quiet American, off to pacify a country that has proved to be a graveyard of theories.

In a competitive democracy, it is difficult to rescue a war built on distortions and illusions, because, to protect falsehoods proffered to voters in the past, a President and his advisers may find it tempting to manufacture more of them. It does not require a cynic to see that even an implausible escalation plan has the virtue of putting domestic political opponents back on their heels. This was the advice given by McGeorge Bundy to Lyndon Johnson in a memo dated February 7, 1965, concerning an escalation plan for Vietnam that Bundy thought might have as little as a twenty-five-per-cent chance of success:

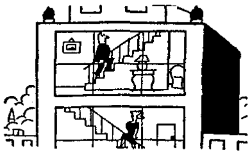
> Even if it fails, the policy will be worth it. At a minimum it will damp down the charge that we did not do all that we could have done, and this charge will be important in many countries, including our own.



The Bush Administration is now reworking this sad axiom, and, once again, American soldiers will be asked to give their lives for its assumptions. Under the Constitution, only Congress can prevent this from occurring, but its members have exhibited little evidence in the past that they possess the skill or the will to do so.

—Steve Coll

OUR CHANGING WORLD
CABLE GUY



Passersby negotiating Columbus Circle during the next few weeks will be unable to help noticing an enormous square box floating in the lofty lobby of the Time Warner Center, lit from within like a Japanese lantern and looming disconcertingly over the escalators that descend to Whole Foods. This is Time Warner's Home to the Future, an installation contrived to showcase the cable company's up-to-the-moment-and-beyond offerings for digitally enhanced living. In the future that is promised by Time Warner's perplexingly prepositioned Home to the Future, kitchens will be equipped with laptops for looking up recipes; family rooms will have streaming media that everyone, not just the adolescents in the family, will know how to turn on; and the TV in the bedroom will be tuned, a substantial amount of the time, to the karaoke channel.

The Home to the Future is the creation of Edwin Schlossberg, who the other day was at the Time Warner Center checking on his brainchild's progress in advance of its official opening. He explained that the installation, which is made from an aluminum truss and scrims of open-weave fabric upon which light can be projected, was "a very New York kind of thing. It's layered, and has eye-catching jewels in it, just as when

on the **town**

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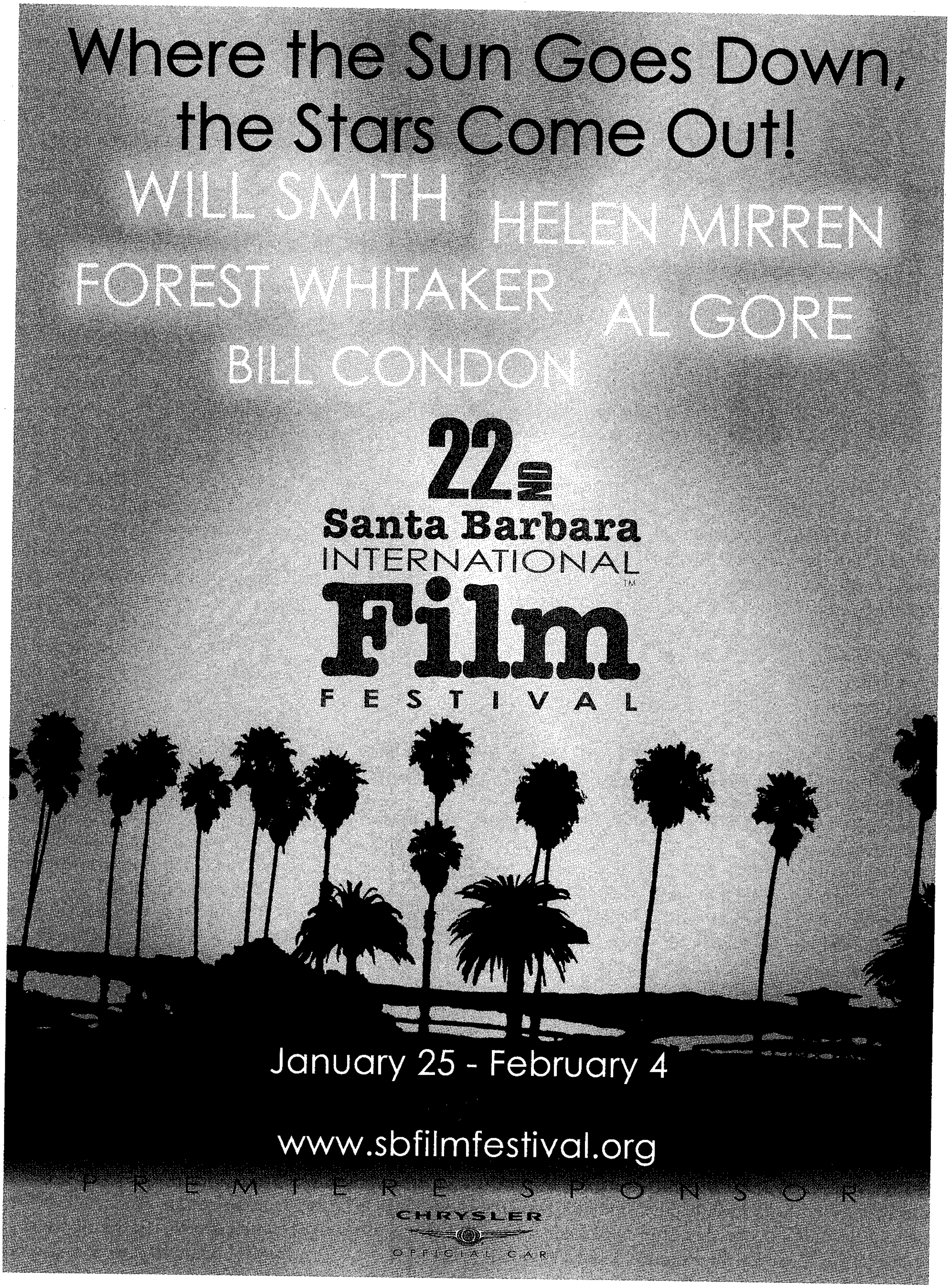
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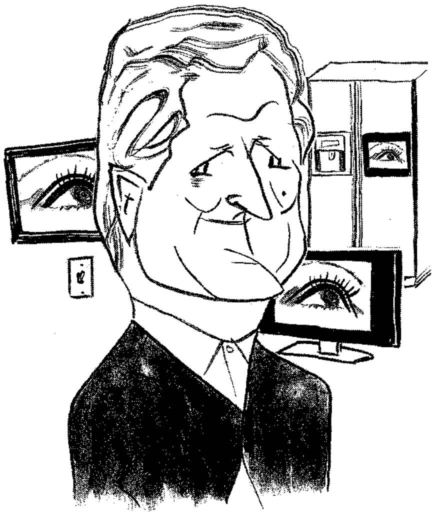
you look down here"—he gestured toward Fifty-ninth Street—"you see the layers of things, until a traffic light stops your eye." Whether anything inside the Time Warner Center can rightly be referred to as a very New York kind of thing—it seems a mere accident of geography that the building itself is not being heralded as a very Houston or a very Atlanta kind of thing—Schlossberg himself falls into that category. As well as being a creator of high-end signage, he is an artist (he does things with Plexiglas) and an author of books (including one entitled "Interactive Excellence: Defining and Developing New Standards for the Twenty-first Century," and one called "Einstein and Beckett," which consists of an imaginary conversation between the two men). He is also the husband of the mysterious and clever Caroline Kennedy, a role that certainly calls for interactive excellence.



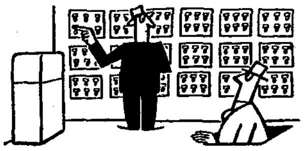
Edwin Schlossberg

The Schlossberg-Kennedy residence—on Park Avenue—does not exactly fit the paradigm presented by the Time Warner Home to the Future. "We have one television," Schlossberg explained. "No—two," he added after a moment. "There's another TV in the bedroom." (No karaoke there, though Schlossberg says that he has been known to take up the mic at birthday parties for his three children: his signature tune is "New York, New York.") Schlossberg is unintimidated by technology—he wrote "The Pocket Calculator Game Book," back in 1975—but he admitted that the flat-screen television embedded in a refrigerator in the Home to the Future might be a step too far for him. The idea of watching television on his cell phone, another of Time Warner's cutting-edge offerings, did, however, have some appeal. "I could watch 'The Daily Show' when I'm walking the dog," he mused.

The exhibit opens this Tuesday with a party featuring a performance by Tony Bennett—not exactly a man of the future, or even to it, although, as Schlossberg points out, "he's in the present, and the event is happening in five days, so that's the future," which is the kind of logic that's to be expected from someone whose college mentor was Buckminster Fuller. Many New Yorkers, of course, might think that, rather than working on the home of the future, Time Warner would do better to focus on improving service to the homes of the present: who would not gladly forgo a plasma TV in the fridge in exchange for some alternative to waiting around between eight and one for a shambling cable guy to show up? To this proposition, Schlossberg acknowledged that there are limits to the powers of his creativity. "I can't make the cable people arrive on schedule," he said.

—*Rebecca Mead*

TECH SUPPORT
E-VOTE



Nothing excites an electoral conspiracy theorist like electronic voting machines. There's the latest foul-up in Florida (eighteen thousand votes lost in the Thirteenth District in November), or the Princeton professor—you can watch him on YouTube—who in less than a minute hacks into a voting machine and plants software redirecting votes from candidate "George Washington" to "Benedict Arnold." In 2002, the federal government mandated that states upgrade their voting systems. New York is among the last in the country to do so—the slowness, depending on whom you ask, derives either from caution or from incompetence. In the meantime, the city's Board of Elections has called in an unlikely authority: the voting public.

A couple of weeks ago, a notice appeared in local papers announcing that all voting-machine venders being considered for a state contract would give a demonstration of their wares in Staten Island. The event was part of an "American Idol"-like series of shows around the city, to culminate in a hearing at which voters will voice their opinions about the machines. Up for consideration, devices that would make a spy shiver: Avante's VOTE-TRAKKER EVC308-FF; ES&S's Model 100 and AutoMARK; Diebold's AccuVote-OS and AutoMARK VAT; and, finally, Sequoia's AVC Advantage Plus and Optech Insight.

On a recent Thursday evening, about twenty voters assembled in the Juror Room of the Staten Island courthouse. A few canes and one oxygen tank rested in the aisles as Gene Seets, of Election Systems & Software, introduced the new M100. "Wow, this is kind of scary!" he said, tapping the microphone. No laughs. "O.K., so I'm a poll worker on Election Day. What do I do?" Seets ran his hand over the M100, which looks like a black photocopying machine. He walked through the process: poll worker uses a key card to open a panel in the side of the machine; machine produces a zero tape (like a grocery-store receipt, which shows that no votes have been recorded); poll worker checks the settings ("Time's right, date's right, year's right—we must have an election!"). The voter marks a paper ballot with a pen and feeds it into a scanner. "And that's the ES&S M100!" Seets said. "I don't think I've ever done this demonstration and had people say, 'Woooooo!,' but it's really easy to use."

In a middle row, Laura Olenick—a poll worker for seven years—muttered, "That's a nice machine."

One of the debates about e-voting involves the choice between optical scanning machines, which, like the M100, read marks on a paper ballot, and direct-recording electronic (DRE) machines, which use a touch screen. At a reception that was held after the demonstrations, a salesman from Avante showed a touch-screen model, the VOTE-TRAKKER EVC308-FF, to Mary Kain, a development officer at the Staten Island Zoo. The VOTE-TRAKKER is shrouded in red curtains and looks like a television on wheels. You touch your candidate's name and the machine spits out a paper receipt, showing whom you've selected. You verify your vote by touching "cast ballot" on the screen, and the machine cuts the receipt and drops it into a metal box.

Kain tried it. "Oh, I voted?" she said when the receipt popped out.

"Your vote's stored in this box," said the salesman, who was wearing a purplish business suit and several gold bracelets. "It's stored on the hard drive, and it's stored in flash memory and on a CD, so nobody—nobody on this planet—can change your vote."

Kain squinted at the receipt, which was the size of a dollar bill. She tapped on the plastic shield that covered it. "Maybe this should be a magnifying glass."

The salesman perked up. "Hey, that's a good idea," he said. "Arthur? Can we do that?"

"Sure," said Arthur Parisi, Avante's technology expert, who had a long ponytail and a goatee.

"It would be cool if you could get a copy of the receipt to take home," Kain said.

"Oh, no," Parisi said. "The state wouldn't let you do that. Then you could sell your vote."

Donna Sandrow, a homemaker, approached Buck Jones, the man who had demonstrated the Diebold machine. "Is there any way that, being from New York State, I could personally verify that these machines are made where you say they're made?" she asked.

"Well, sure!" Jones said. "If you want to do a field trip to Lexington, North Carolina, I'll see that you personally get a tour!"

Sandrow scowled. "I don't trust that machine," she said on her way out.

—Lizzie Widdicombe

FOREIGN EXCHANGE
SAY CHEESE!

Now joining São Paulo fever and the Hong Kong flu is Paris syndrome, a form of psychiatric collapse prevalent in young Japanese tourists on their first visit to Paris. Each year, according to Dr. Hiroaki Ota, about a dozen vacationers suffer from "irritability, a feeling of fear, obsession, depressed mood, insomnia, and an impression of persecution by the French"; their mental breakdowns, as the BBC reported last month, are brought on by a buildup of excitement, followed by such Gallic letdowns as insufficiently picturesque sights and rude waiters. Given the recent record-breaking influx of foreign visitors to New York (forty-four million in 2006!), you have to wonder: if the service at La Tour d'Argent can fell a fragile traveller, what sort of anxieties might be sown by a city as gruff as this one?

"Japanese people don't like to go online and plan their own trips," Carol Elk said one recent morning at the offices of the Japanese Travel Bureau, on Seventh Avenue. Having worked for two years as a visit coördinator for J.T.B., Elk is familiar with the preferences, and potential disappointments, of the Nikkei-in-New York. "If you're booking a Broadway show, it has to be Disney," she said. "Nobody's ever heard of 'Wicked.' Jazz clubs are big, and steak houses; groups want the Rainbow Room for parties." When she was asked if her clients had high expectations of New York, Elk replied, "Where do I start?" She recounted a story about a man, in town to run the marathon, whose name had been misspelled on his nametag. J.T.B. had been forced to write him a letter of apology. "You'd think the Ark of the Covenant had been stolen!" Elk said.

She went on to detail some imperatives: hotel rooms must have bathtubs and, even for married couples, separate beds; the highest-ranking executive in a business group stays on a higher floor than his subordinates; most museums are "kind of 'eh,' " but MOMA is popular because it was designed by a Japanese architect; Yankees tickets should be in left field, for optimal viewing of Matsui. Slightly less understandable was a request that Elk says she gets frequently: to have dinner at home with a regular American family. "I tell people, 'We'll pay you, we'll have it catered, we'll send someone to clean up.' But nobody will do it in New York."

That afternoon, Elk fulfilled the wish of a group of Japanese accountants, taking a busload of them to tour a storefront franchise of the Jackson Hewitt tax-preparation service in the Bronx. (The day before, they had visited two branches of H&R Block.) The visitors wore business attire, and asked, through an interpreter, polite but lethal questions.

Q: "I am sorry, I am sorry, during closed time—ah, downtime—do stores remain open?"

A: "I would say probably half remain open year-round and the others actually close. We call those *seasonal stores*."

The questions were answered with a schoolteacherish twang by Ken Boyer, a regional director, up from Virginia Beach.

The Bronx office had been selected for the tour because it is owned by Mandeep Sobti, a no-nonsense Sikh who, Boyer said, "is famous at Jackson Hewitt; he's our largest franchisee," and also because it is a block from Yankee Stadium, "which is very dynamic." However, this office may not have been the ideal venue for cross-cultural exchange, given that it had just opened that day.

"What is going on back there?" a visitor asked, interrupting a discussion about the division of Jackson Hewitt franchise territories. A man in a sea-green turban walked by carrying a piece of lumber. It seemed that a conference room was under construction. Over in a corner, one of the visiting accountants snapped digital pictures of a poster that read, "Hassle Free Service/Because Your Life Should Be Less Taxing," and featured a toothy couple in fishing gear and waders.

Howard Sigman, an officer at the Japanese Consulate here, said, by telephone, that he does not believe in the existence of Paris syndrome, or, for that matter, a New York strain. (The consulate repatriates about twenty-five Japanese citizens each year, but Sigman said that even those cases that are triggered by culture shock are mostly the result of a preëxisting mental illness.) Still, back on the tour bus, it was possible to detect hints of malaise. Shinpei Kagawa, of Osaka, said that he had enjoyed seeing all the ethnic groups but felt unsafe walking around the city at night. Masafumi Tomoshige, from Saga, was disappointed that he hadn't seen a car chase. A Tokyoite, Ichiro Iijima, complained about the cold, the expense, the lack of slippers in his hotel, the slow elevators, and the very bad food. He giggled and gestured toward one of his colleagues. "He doesn't like New York, but he thinks you're cute," Iijima said to Elk, invoking the common symptoms of a more universal syndrome.

—Lauren Collins

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

THE SKY-HIGH CLUB

Even the most jaded observer of American corporate culture had to blink when, earlier this month, Home Depot's board of directors handed the company's C.E.O., Bob Nardelli, more than two hundred million dollars after pushing him out of his job. Nardelli had not delivered for shareholders: Home Depot's stock price went down about six per cent during his tenure. And, while his operating performance was actually quite good, he would have made a lot of money even if it hadn't been: most of his contract was guaranteed, and, when he had a hard time meeting a particular target for his bonus, the board generously substituted an easier one.

The size of Nardelli's severance was startling, but his "heads I win, tails you lose" arrangement is far from unusual in corporate America these days. For all the talk of restraining C.E.O. pay, most compensation committees remain what Warren Buffett once called them—"tail-wagging puppy dogs." At some companies, this is simply because the C.E.O. has packed the board with cronies. But at Home Depot Nardelli did not pick the board members, and most of them were what are usually called independent directors—ones who don't work for the company or do any business with it. Even when an independent board negotiates a C.E.O.'s contract, however, the directors are often, in a sense, negotiating with themselves. Of the ten independent members of Home Depot's board, for instance, eight are or have been C.E.O.s. Since C.E.O. pay is often driven by comparisons between companies, directors have a certain interest in keeping executive pay high. Furthermore, the salaries keep escalating because, board members argue, there just aren't enough good C.E.O. candidates out there. There's no evidence that this is actually the case, but who is more likely to feel that good C.E.O.s are indispensable and rare than other C.E.O.s?

A more complex problem lies in the nature of the social networks that bind directors and executives together. Home Depot has an exceptionally well-connected board. On average, its directors sit on two other outside boards, and the compensation-committee chairman sits on four. Connections are often beneficial—they insure that people are well informed, creating opportunities for new business. Unfortunately, the more connected board members are, the likelier they are to overpay for executive talent. In some cases, which economists call "interlocking" directorates, this is straightforward: I sit on your board and you sit on mine, and we both have an incentive to be generous. Sure enough, several studies have found that companies with interlocking directors pay C.E.O.s significantly more. Surprisingly, though, connectedness remains important even when the links are not direct. A study of S.&P. 500 companies, by Amir Barnea and Ilan Guedj, finance professors at the University of Texas, found that, even after other factors were accounted for, C.E.O.s at companies whose directors sat on a number of other boards were paid thirteen per cent more than C.E.O.s at companies whose directors were not.

Why? One reason is that the more connections board members have, the more likely they are to end up with what you could call "friend of a friend" links to the company's C.E.O. A recent study by a team of business-school professors mapped the social networks of twenty-two thousand directors at more than three thousand companies, charting the degrees of separation between directors and C.E.O.s, and found that at companies where there are what the study's authors termed "short, friendly" links between directors and executives C.E.O.s are paid significantly more. But even in the absence of this kind of explicit back-scratching the tight connections between board members insure that, once an idea takes hold at a few companies, it's easier for it to spread, in a viral fashion. A host of studies have found that network ties affect how likely companies are to adopt anti-takeover strategies, to embark on specific types of acquisitions, and even to change their organizational structures. The same effect is observable in the matter of C.E.O. pay: Barnea and Guedj found that board members at companies where C.E.O. pay was high were more likely to support high pay when they sat on other companies' boards as well. And, as with any virus, some people are more potent transmitters: Kenneth Langone, the board member who engineered Nardelli's hiring at Home Depot, was also the head of the compensation committee that approved Dick Grasso's extravagant payday at the New York Stock Exchange, and was on the G.E. board's compensation committee that approved Jack Welch's luxurious retirement package. Langone is what an epidemiologist might call a supercarrier of the executive-pay virus.

It's tempting to wonder if the sheer prevalence of enormous C.E.O. compensation packages means that they have some beneficial effect. But academics have found little evidence that higher executive pay leads to better company performance, and the recent study of three thousand companies actually found that the firms whose directors were the most well connected—and which paid their C.E.O.s most lavishly—in fact underperformed the market. Markets work best when people make independent decisions about how much a commodity—in this case, the C.E.O.—is worth. They stop working well when people simply imitate what others are doing, or when non-market factors (like how well you get along with the boss) intrude. In the end, the very things that make people likely to join a board—connections, business experience, sociability—are also the things that make them less effective once they do.

—*James Surowiecki*

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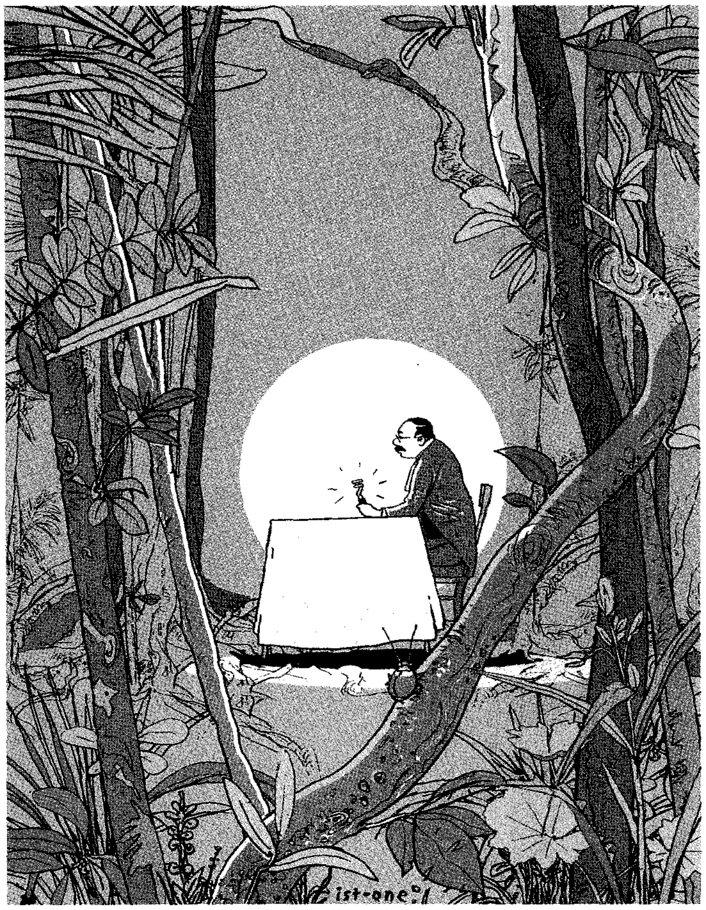
PROFILES

MR. GREEN

Environmentalism's most optimistic guru.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

Amory Lovins's home, which also serves as his office and "bioshelter," is open for self-guided tours weekdays from nine o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon. Built into a mountainside above Snowmass, Colorado, it has curved stone walls, a flat roof, and several sets of solar panels, some of which rotate to track the angle of the sun. The building's double-paned windows are lined with a polyester film that allows visible light to pass in but prevents thermal radiation from getting out, and the space between the panes has been filled with krypton. Although wintertime temperatures on the mountain routinely drop below zero, the building has no furnace; it is warmed by sunlight and by heat that has been collected in, among other places, a pond that lies between the Xerox machine and the dining room. The first time I visited, Lovins had just finished doing some laundry in his front-loaded, energy-saving washing machine. He took the damp clothes out of the washer and hung them in a little glass-ceilinged room. It was a bright blue morning, and Lovins predicted that the clothes would be ready to wear by nightfall. In the winter, if the sky is overcast, it can take up to two days for items like bluejeans to dry completely, but this is no problem, he assured me, provided one is capable of thinking more than twenty-four hours in advance.



"I don't do problems," Amory Lovins says. "I do solutions."

ISTVAN BANYAI

Lovins is a short man with a salt-and-pepper mustache, a fringe of tousled black hair, and droopy brown eyes that give him a passing resemblance to Einstein. He wears Coke-bottle eyeglasses, a necklace of turquoise beads, and a watch that is supposed to prevent jet lag by sending out an electromagnetic signal exactly the same frequency as the earth's. He is routinely described, even by people who don't particularly like or admire him, as a "genius."

Lovins first came to national attention in 1976, when he was twenty-eight. In an essay published in *Foreign Affairs*, he asserted that the United States could completely phase out its use of fossil fuels and do so not at a cost but at a profit. "We stand here confronted," he wrote, quoting Pogo, "by insurmountable opportunities." At the time, the country was in the midst of what might now be called the first energy crisis, and the article created a stir; testifying on Capitol Hill, Lovins emerged as the demand-side management version of a rock star. Symposia were held to debate his ideas, and critiques were published by, among others, the physicist and Nobel Laureate Hans Bethe. (Lovins, in turn, wrote a response twice as long as Bethe's critique, and Bethe conceded several points.)

Thirty years later, the world faces another energy crisis, and Lovins still sees limitless opportunity. He maintains that the U.S. can eliminate its use of oil by 2050, even while reducing its coal and natural-gas consumption, enjoying unprecedented prosperity, and preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Although Lovins was one of the first to appreciate the dangers of global warming, he believes that the problem seems so daunting only because those studying it have got the math wrong. "Climate protection, like the Hubble space telescope, has been spoiled by a sign error," he told me.

Lovins is a prolific writer—of books, of articles, and of technical treatises. During my first visit with him, he informed me that he had picked out a few of the most important ones for me to take home: papers on topics like microgeneration, "super-efficient" building practices, and data-center design were arranged in stacks that covered nearly the entire surface of a large dining-room table. That day, we ended up talking for several hours, and as I was packing up my things to go Lovins went to check on his laundry. It was nearly dry, he reported cheerfully. As I was driving back down the mountain in my rental car, it occurred to me that Lovins might be the most impractical person I had ever met. Then it occurred to me that he might be the only truly practical one.

This year, Americans will consume close to four trillion kilowatt hours of electricity. In addition, we will burn through a hundred and forty-three billion gallons of gasoline, which at current retail prices will cost us some three hundred and sixty billion dollars, and twenty-six billion gallons of jet fuel, worth fifty billion dollars. To heat our homes and businesses this winter, we will purchase sixty-two billion dollars' worth of natural gas and heating oil, and just to grill our weenies we will buy some seven hundred and seventy-one million dollars' worth of charcoal briquettes. In 2007, total energy expenditures in the U.S. will come to more than a quadrillion dollars, or roughly a tenth of the country's gross domestic product.

With so much at stake, basic economics suggests that any significant inefficiencies should have been wrung out of the system long ago. It follows that further efforts will cost more than they will return. This reasoning is pervasive in the U.S., its most prominent spokesman being Vice-President Dick Cheney, who once dismissed energy conservation as a "sign of personal virtue." Lovins's fundamental premise is that this fundamental premise is wrong.

"You know, there's this old joke about the economist who's taking his mannerly granddaughter for a walk," he told me. "She says, 'Oh, Grandpa, I see a twenty-dollar bill lying in the street. May I go pick it up, please?' He says, 'Don't worry, my dear. If it were real, somebody would have picked it up already.' " Lovins likes to say that he takes economics "seriously, not literally." In his view, the streets are littered with twenty-dollar bills.

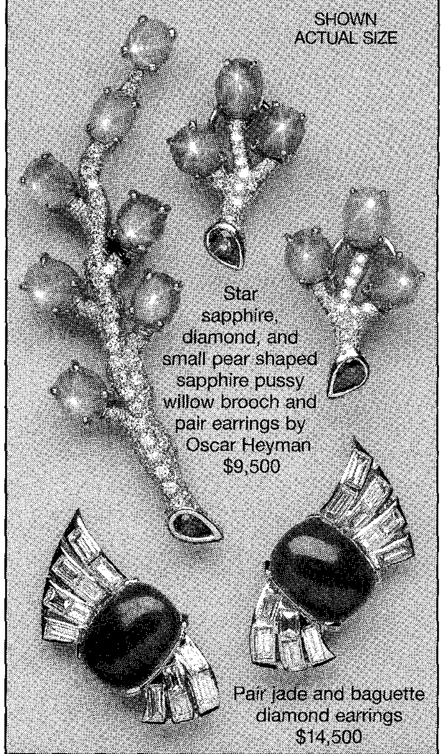
Lovins makes his living as the C.E.O. of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a consulting firm that he founded twenty-five years ago with his wife at the time, Hunter. R.M.I. used to operate out of Lovins's Snowmass home; in recent years it has outgrown these quarters—it now employs more than fifty people—and has expanded into new offices, some in Boulder and the rest down the road from his house, in a building that once belonged to a foundation created by John Denver. Lovins calls the firm an "entrepreneurial nonprofit," and its stated goal, which he often recites word for word, is to foster "the efficient and restorative use of resources to make the world secure, just, prosperous, and life-sustaining." Some of R.M.I.'s clients embrace this goal in its entirety, others at best selectively. (While I was visiting Lovins, he delivered the "efficient and restorative" spiel to a representative of the Singaporean government who had come to discuss manufacturing; her response was to giggle nervously.)

R.M.I., for its part, does not demand commonality of purpose. In "Why We Work with the Military," an essay posted on R.M.I.'s Web site, Lovins rejects the criticism—sometimes voiced by his own employees—that by consulting for the Department of Defense the institute is simply helping to kill people in a more energy-efficient manner. "A molecule of oil burned or carbon dioxide released has the same consequences no matter who used it," he observes. Other R.M.I. clients have included San Diego Gas & Electric, Royal Dutch Shell, and Anglo American PLC, one of the world's largest mining companies. A few years ago, Texas Instruments hired R.M.I. to help design a new chip-manufacturing plant in Richardson, Texas. It is expected to use twenty per cent less energy and thirty-five per cent less water than a typical chip factory of comparable size. It also cost thirty per cent less to build.

"Amory doesn't take a bullying, negative approach," Paul Westbrook, Texas Instruments' manager for sustainable development, told me. "He just says, 'Here's a better way, and here's why it works.' And you think, Well, we'd be kind of dumb not to do that." One of the ways the new Texas Instruments plant will save energy is by capturing heat that normally would have been discarded as waste. "We implemented heat recovery, and, lo and behold, we didn't need as many boilers," Westbrook said.

A lot of Lovins's ideas sound radical and futuristic—ultra-light cars made of carbon fibres, vehicles that generate electricity when they're not on the road, an economy powered by hydrogen. At the same time, he is a passionate advocate of what he calls "good, old-fashioned Victorian engineering," and believes that a great many problems can be solved using high-school physics. (Lovins can spend hours describing the energy savings that follow from steps as simple as increasing the diameter of pipes.) This combination of high- and low-tech enthusiasms makes his outlook difficult to categorize. Once, when I casually used the phrase "thinking outside the box," Lovins interrupted me. "There is no box," he said.

Perhaps R.M.I.'s most influential client these days is Wal-Mart. Just to cart around goods that it sells in its stores, the



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company employs some sixty-eight hundred trucks, which annually consume at least a hundred and twenty-five million gallons of diesel fuel. In 2005, after consulting with Lovins, Wal-Mart announced plans to double its fleet's fuel efficiency over the next ten years, from an average of six and a half miles per gallon to thirteen. Already, all of the company's trucks have been outfitted with auxiliary power units so that the driver doesn't have to keep the engine idling just to run the air-conditioner.

"In a room of ten people talking about why it can't be done, Amory is the one working on the five ways to get there," Andy Ruben, Wal-Mart's vice-president for corporate strategy and sustainability, told me.

"I don't do problems" is how Lovins once put it to me. "I do solutions."

Lovins, who is fifty-nine, grew up in towns along the Eastern Seaboard; when he was a child, his family moved from Silver Spring, Maryland, to Elmsford, New York, and then from Montclair, New Jersey, to Amherst, Massachusetts. His father, who designed optical equipment, spent a lot of time in his home workshop, tinkering, and in this way Lovins, too, became interested in gadgets. While he was still in high school, he built a nuclear magnetic-resonance spectrometer in his basement, and discovered what he calls a "peculiar and still unexplained solid-state effect" having to do with cobalt. When he went off to Harvard, he helped pay his way by doing consulting work in experimental physics for, among others, the Lincoln Laboratory at M.I.T. Lovins enjoyed college—in addition to physics, he studied law, linguistics, and chemistry. But when, in his junior year, he was told he would have to complete a major he dropped out and moved to England. He attended Oxford until he was once again pushed toward a prescribed course of study, at which point he quit school again.

By this time—1971—Lovins had come under the influence of David Brower, the charismatic founder of Friends of the Earth, and he went to work for the organization in London. One of Britain's largest mining companies, Rio Tinto, announced a plan to mine for copper in a national park in Wales, and at Brower's urging Lovins spent a year writing a book about the park. The book, "Eryri, the Mountains of Longing," was instrumental in blocking Rio Tinto's plan. In the process of writing it, Lovins began to question the utility of his earlier research. (Today, Rio Tinto is a client of R.M.I.)

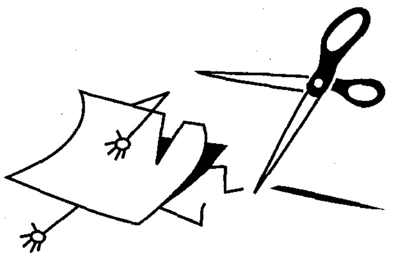
"It gradually occurred to me that the problems I was working on, whether they were tertiary structure of proteins or straight physics, were interesting but not very important," he recalled. "Even understanding mitochondrial-membrane kinetics, which I briefly dabbled in, would be not nearly as important as solving basic problems of energy resources, environment, development, and security. Because it didn't much matter how well we understood these other matters if we weren't here."

Much of Lovins's early work centered on atomic energy. He wrote a series of papers arguing that the whole "atoms for peace" idea was misguided: there was no way to promote nuclear power without also promoting nuclear proliferation. (One of these papers spent two years under review by the U.S. government, which feared that Lovins had drawn the connection between processed fuel and bombmaking a little too clearly; the paper eventually appeared in *Nature*.) In his 1976 *Foreign Affairs* article, which was titled "Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken?," Lovins urged that the U.S. stop exporting nuclear technology and, simultaneously, that it phase out its own atomic-energy program. In the same piece, he warned that some of the alternatives to nuclear power were no less dangerous. At a time when the phrase "global warming" was barely in circulation, he observed:

> The commitment to a long-term coal economy many times the scale of today's makes the doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration early in the next century virtually unavoidable, with the prospect then or soon thereafter of substantial and perhaps irreversible changes in global climate. Only the exact date of such changes is in question.

Lovins's opposition to both nuclear and coal-fired plants raised an obvious problem. How did he expect an energy-intensive economy like the U.S.'s to function? The way out of this bind, Lovins argued, was to reimagine it. People weren't interested in energy for its own sake but, rather, for the benefits—hot showers, cold drinks, dry clothes—that it conferred. If Americans could get the same benefits using less energy, then they would, in effect, have found a new energy source. Meanwhile, instead of building large centralized power stations, they could gradually shift to localized sources of renewable power, like solar cells. Lovins labelled a future dominated by an ever greater number of ever larger power plants "the hard path"; the alternative he called "the soft path."

"The hard path entails serious environmental risks, many of which are poorly understood and some of which have probably not yet been thought of," he wrote. "The soft path . . . hedges our bets. Its environmental impacts are relatively small, tractable and reversible." Several years later, perusing a report put out by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Lovins came upon a misprint: someone had typed an "n" for an "m" in the word "megawatt." He coined another new term: "negawatt." A negawatt is a watt of electricity that does not have to be generated because an energy-saving measure has obviated the need for it. By replacing a seventy-five-watt incandescent light bulb with a fourteen-watt compact fluorescent bulb, an individual can, for example, produce sixty-one negawatts. By replacing ten incandescent bulbs with ten compact fluorescents, the individual can generate six hundred and ten negawatts. Negawatts tend to produce more negawatts; for instance, a house lit with compact fluorescents requires less air-conditioning, since fluorescent bulbs emit a fraction of the heat of incandescents. The same principle can be applied to all forms of energy, including oil. Lovins likes to call the United States the "Saudi Arabia of nega-barrels."



This past fall, Lovins came to Manhattan for a conference sponsored by former President Bill Clinton. The evening before the conference began, I went out to dinner with him at a Japanese restaurant in midtown. We were ushered into a room in the back. A cone-shaped light fixture hanging from the ceiling cast

"Could we up the dosage? I still have feelings."

a pallid gleam onto the table. A few feet away, a row of recessed lights threw circles of brightness onto nothing in particular.

"This is what happens if your lighting is designed by electricians," Lovins told me, glancing around. "Who wants spots of light on the carpet?" He noted that all the bulbs were incandescents, and that the bulb hanging over the table was on a dimmer, which further reduced its already minimal efficiency. Lovins estimated that a better-designed system could cut the restaurant's lighting costs by eighty per cent. "There's upwards of a hundred giant power plants to be saved by proper lighting systems," he observed, before turning his attention to the sushi menu.

To spend time with Lovins is to see the world as one long string of bad decisions. Waste and profligacy are everywhere: in inefficient lights, heat-leaking windows, gas-guzzling trucks, poorly designed eateries. It's not that people are stupid, exactly. It's that their intelligence is limited. When they make decisions, they tend to worry only about their own self-interest, which they see in such narrow terms that they miss the larger opportunities all around.

Take, for example, the electrical system of an average office building. "If we were to dig into the ceiling of most offices where the wiring is for the lighting, we'd probably find that the wire size was specced by the low-bid electrician to meet the National Electrical Code," Lovins told me. "The code says you need wire so fat for so much current. Well, it turns out that wire-size code is meant to prevent fires. What would be economically optimal in terms of resistance losses would be wire twice as fat, which means four times as much copper. Now, the electrician isn't going to pay your electric bills, right? If you had such an altruistic electrician that they were willing to put in four times as many pounds of copper to get you a one-year payback on your electric bills, they wouldn't get the job, because they wouldn't be the low-bid electrician anymore."

The problem here is what's known as a split incentive, but might better be called a mis-incentive. If the parties figured out how to divvy up the savings, they could both make money, but, because of ingrained habits, or a lack of creativity, these savings are never realized.

"Let me give you a specific case—a two-hundred-thousand-square-foot curtain-wall office tower near Chicago," Lovins said. "Chicago is cold in the winter and hot in the summer, and this was a very uncomfortable building all year round. In the winter, it had frost growing on the walls. The window seals were starting to fail, because they were twenty years old, so they were going to have to reglaze the whole glass curtain wall. Normally, you would put in the same glass that's already there, which in this case was dark, double-bronze, heat-absorbing glass with a gray film. It let in nine per cent of the light, so the place was as gloomy as a cave. We designed a super-window that would let in nearly six times as much visible light but a tenth less unwanted heat. It cost an extra seventy-eight cents per square foot of glass. If you combined those super-windows with retrofits that bounced the daylight all the way through the floor plate and with very efficient lights and lighting controls and office equipment, you could cut the peak cooling load on the hottest afternoon more than fourfold. That meant that instead of just renovating the big old air-conditioning system you could replace it with one that's four times smaller. And that would cost two hundred thousand bucks less, and that money could then pay for the better windows and the retrofitting of the lighting and other improvements. So you'd end up saving three-quarters of the energy at a slightly lower cost than the regular renovation—the payback time was minus five months. So we proposed that to the owner. They liked it, and we all thought it was going to be implemented. Surprise! It never happened. Why not? Because that particular building was controlled by a leasing agent whose incentive was deal flow. Whenever a floor got leased up, the agent would pocket a commission. And, not wanting to interrupt the commissions for a few months, the leasing agent vetoed the retrofit.

"It was a lovely lesson in how real such perverse incentives are—and how pervasive," Lovins went on. "Each one is a showstopper, and each one is a business opportunity."

• •

The Clinton Global Initiative is part of the Renaissance Weekend–Sun Valley–Davos circuit, and it combines, freely, elements from the Council on Foreign Relations and the *Vanity Fair* Oscar party. (On my way to meet Lovins, I happened upon Richard Branson salaaming, "Wayne's World" style, to Archbishop Desmond Tutu.) The day the conference began, Lovins slept in, missing speeches by Bill Clinton and Laura Bush, but showed up for a working lunch devoted to energy and climate change. He was wearing a black suit and carrying a duffelbag-size briefcase. At his table were an executive from Cisco, the head of a Norwegian philanthropy, and the chairman of a group called SmartTransportation.org, who told me that Lovins's work had inspired him to form the organization. The lunch was served on plates made from organically grown bamboo, and the table linens had been woven from compostable hemp. While the fair-trade coffee was being served, Warren Buffett walked in. Lovins unzipped his case, which turned out to contain, in addition to a laptop, a small library of R.M.I.-produced books and papers. He picked out a three-hundred-page book titled "Winning the Oil

Endgame" and made a beeline for Buffett. When Buffett declined to take the volume—he asked that it be sent to him at his office—Lovins seemed disappointed. But he recovered almost immediately. "That's smart of him," he whispered to me. "He doesn't take anything too heavy."

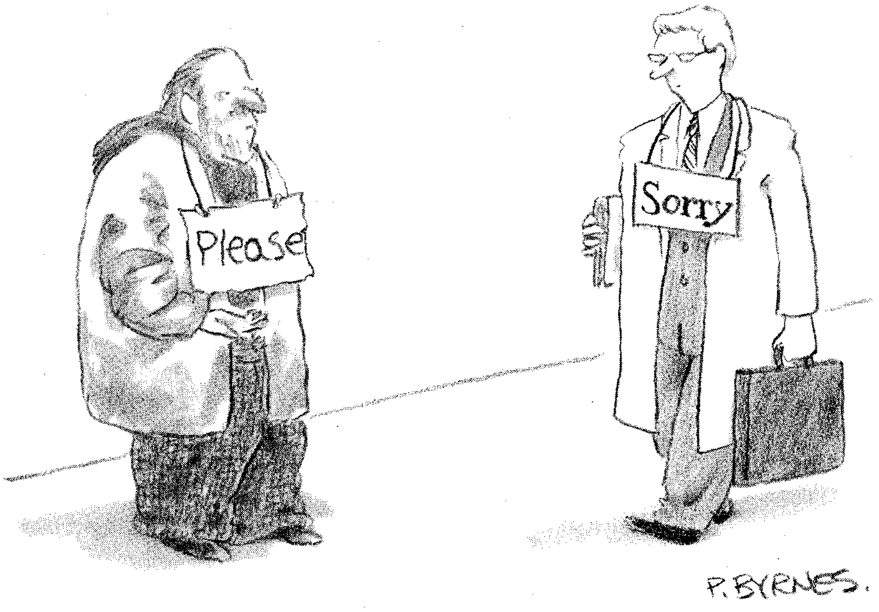
After lunch, everyone switched tables. This time, Lovins ended up sitting with several executives from Ford; Purnendu Chatterjee, the head of a private equity firm; and William McDonough, one of the preëminent "green" architects in the United States. In the front of the room, executives from the Swiss Reinsurance Company and DuPont were holding a panel discussion on energy-saving companies with the former NATO commander General Wesley Clark. Lovins spent most of the discussion sending e-mails. One was to the Norwegian philanthropist he had just met. The philanthropist owned a cheese farm; Lovins attached a paper on energy-efficient dairy farming. When General Clark said something he disagreed with, Lovins sent him a long e-mail outlining why. During a brief break in the program, Lovins sought out Thomas Friedman, the *Times* columnist, and Rick Fedrizzi, the president of the U.S. Green Building Council, to give them a PowerPoint on a school R.M.I. had redesigned in Brazil. According to Lovins, the redesign had not only saved money but also improved students' test scores and, somewhat more mysteriously, their dental health. During another break, he presented the mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, with an inch-thick pile of articles. As Newsom took the articles, he laughingly alluded to an equally thick pile of reading material Lovins had handed him several weeks earlier, in Davos.

"Amory is my hero," José María Figueres, the former President of Costa Rica, told me. "He is just so much fun. I love the way he takes advantage of the opportunity to push his agenda in the most"—he paused for a moment—"wholesome way."

After the formal program ended, Lovins stayed on to talk to Purnendu Chatterjee. Among many other things, Chatterjee's firm holds a controlling interest in a refinery in India. Lovins told him that typically, in a refinery retrofit, R.M.I. had been able to cut energy use by more than forty per cent. "Wow!" Chatterjee exclaimed. He said that he was thinking of building a new refinery. Lovins licked his lips and handed Chatterjee a stack of literature.

That night, there was a huge gala for conference participants at the Museum of Modern Art. Lovins arrived with another copy of "Winning the Oil Endgame" under his arm. It's not easy to eat a plateful of canapés while holding on to a three-hundred-page book, but somehow he managed. He chatted with the head of an Australian automotive company about vehicle efficiency; to an official of Habitat for Humanity about low-cost homes that can be made from bamboo; and to an executive from Coca-Cola (another R.M.I. client). At one point, I told Lovins that a man who happened to be standing near us was one of New York's largest real-estate owners. Lovins headed straight for him. He delivered his usual pitch about making money by saving energy. The man pointed out that as a landlord he didn't benefit from gains in efficiency; his tenants did. Lovins advised him to restructure his leasing agreements so that both parties could share in the gains. The man took Lovins's business card.

As the evening wore on, and most people fell to drinking and schmoozing with their friends, Lovins continued to work the room. When the dessert trays were being wheeled out, I lost track of him. By the time I caught up with him again, he had managed to give away his book.



"Winning the Oil Endgame" is a characteristic Lovinsian project—ostensibly hard-nosed and at the same time shamelessly utopian. The book's foreword is by the former Secretary of State George Shultz, who notes that "Amory Lovins loves to be a bull in a china closet—anybody's china closet," and the epigraph is by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." The book's premise is a variation on the theme Lovins first laid out back in 1976, this time applied to petroleum. The U.S., he argues, can cut its oil imports to zero by 2040, eliminate oil use entirely by 2050, and make money in the process.

In December, Lovins travelled to Washington, D.C., to give a talk on the book. I met him at the airport, and on the way into town we stopped at his hotel to drop off his suitcase. When Lovins opened the door to his room, he was met by a blast of hot air. The room had its own thermostat, which had been set to seventy-nine degrees. A lamp by the desk was burning cheerfully. Lovins peered under the shade. "It's an incandescent," he said, switching it off.

Lovins's speech took place in a hotel not far from the Pentagon. The crowd that greeted him in the ballroom was an eclectic mix: representatives from organizations like the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and the Post Carbon Institute were sitting next to officials from the Defense Department and the Government Accountability Office. (The research for "Winning the Oil Endgame" was partly funded by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.)

Lovins began with a slide showing an Army tent on a patch of sand—presumably in Iraq or Afghanistan. The tent was completely uninsulated. In front of it stood a five-ton air-conditioning unit, and somewhere in the distance an oil-fired generator was producing the electricity to power the unit. The oil for the generator had had to be hauled a great distance, at great peril to those guarding it, and yet most of the energy was going, in Lovins's words, into "air-conditioning the desert."

From the desert, Lovins turned to the seas to tell one of his favorite stories, about whale hunting. "In 1850, the fifth-biggest industry in our country was whaling, and most houses were lit by whale-oil lamps," he said. "But as whales started to get shy or scarce and the price of whale oil drifted up, this started to elicit competition, particularly from coal-based oil and gas." By 1859, these competitors had seized five-sixths of the whale-oil-lighting market. "This was a real shock to the whalers. They never expected to run out of customers before they ran out of whales. But that's what happened, and they were soon reduced to begging for subsidies on national-security grounds.

"Oil feels a little like this now," Lovins continued. "We've spent over thirty years amassing a very powerful portfolio of new ways to save oil or substitute for oil, but no one had bothered to add it up. And when we did so we found it was enough to save all the oil we use and more."

The largest share of oil consumed in the U.S.—nearly seventy per cent—is eaten up by transportation. By Lovins's reckoning, most of that is wasted. The power needed to propel a car is a function of its weight, so building a vehicle out of steel means using energy largely to move metal. Lovins proposes making cars instead out of ultra-light carbon composites. An ultra-light car with a Prius-style hybrid engine could—in theory, at least—get upward of seventy miles per gallon. Lovins has been pushing an ultra-light vehicle of his own invention, which he calls a Hypercar, for the past fifteen years, and has created a company, named Fiberforge, to license the technology needed to manufacture the necessary parts. But so far no one has been willing to finance a prototype. (Lovins himself gets around in a hybrid Honda Insight, which sports the bumper sticker "I'd rather be driving a Hypercar.")

According to Lovins, by switching to ultra-light vehicles (including airplanes) and implementing a variety of other "end-use efficiency" technologies the U.S. could eliminate half of its oil needs. It could eliminate another twenty per cent by substituting biofuels for oil, and the last thirty per cent by replacing oil with natural gas. (Saving enough natural gas to replace a third of the country's oil could be easily accomplished, he maintains, by, among other things, reducing electricity consumption.) The cost of eliminating oil use entirely would, by his calculations, come to half of what, by official forecasts, would be spent on purchasing it. Meanwhile, the U.S.'s CO_2 emissions would drop by twenty-five per cent.

"We know this sort of thing works, because we've done it before," Lovins assured the crowd in Washington. He gestured toward a graph of oil consumption that had been projected onto a screen behind him. "Look at how steeply oil use and imports fell the last time we paid attention, which was from 1977 to 1985. In those eight years, the economy grew twenty-seven per cent while oil use fell seventeen per cent.

"All this can be done with all the same economic growth and the same growth in driving, in flying, in huge houses, and so on, that's in the government forecasts," he continued. "No new invention and no changes in life style. And it could all be done without new taxes, mandates, subsidies, federal laws, or anything else either party doesn't like or could mess up." Lovins went on in this vein for nearly ninety minutes, ending with a quote from Marshall McLuhan: "Only puny secrets need protection. Big discoveries are protected by public incredulity."

Lovins's talk had gone on so long that there wasn't much time for Q. & A. The few questions asked—most of them comments, really—ranged from mildly skeptical to aggressively so. One man demanded to know why Lovins would not "accept the fact" that there had been many advances in nuclear-power safety. A second man stood up and said that as long as he could afford it he was going to continue to drive his Jeep, his Jaguar, and his Harley. He said that the only way he could see to move the U.S. off oil was to raise the price. Afterward, while Lovins was handing out more copies of "Winning the Oil Endgame," I got to talking to David Goldstein, the president of the Electric Vehicle Association of Greater Washington. He said that he did not expect to see ultra-light cars on the road anytime soon.

"Amory doesn't understand some of the practical realities of how the world works," he told me. "I want to believe him, but . . ."

Lovins's promise that apparently intractable problems—oil dependence, global warming, nuclear proliferation—can be profitably resolved is both the great appeal of his approach and its biggest liability. Much of what he recommends sounds just too good to be true, the econometric version of "Shed pounds by eating chocolate!"

John Holdren, the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has known Lovins for more than thirty years and considers him a friend. He says that Lovins's contention that a great deal more work could be wrung from the energy we consume is "absolutely unassailable."

"Amory has been more energetic, more persistent, and more creative in thinking about ways to make this happen than anyone else," he told me. "But Amory has always believed—seemed to believe—that free-market economics alone, rationally applied, will solve the problem. And I don't believe that." Holdren observed that current projections suggest that global energy consumption will reach eighteen hundred exajoules by 2100. In order to hold atmospheric CO_2 levels at a "tolerable" level, the world will need to produce five times the amount of energy it now gets from fossil fuels, using sources that produce no carbon dioxide. The only conceivable way to achieve this, he said, is to make the use of fossil fuels much more costly. "We just aren't going to do it unless there's a price on carbon."

Marty Hoffert, a professor emeritus

of physics at New York University who has written extensively on energy demand and global warming, is also on cordial terms with Lovins. "I support virtually all of Amory's calls for efficiency," Hoffert told me. "It's an important thing to have people thinking about efficiency. But I don't think that's going to get us there. If we do things more efficiently, people may just consume more."

This hypothetical problem is not merely hypothetical. Since the mid-nineteen-seventies, the American economy *has* grown steadily more energy efficient. What's called the economy's "energy intensity"—the ratio of B.T.U.s to G.D.P.—has been dropping by roughly one and a half per cent a year, for a total of nearly forty-six per cent over three decades. These savings have, however, been more than offset by people thinking up new ways to use energy, so that in that same period the country's total energy consumption has risen by thirty-nine per cent and its CO_2 emissions by roughly the same proportion.

Meanwhile, the example Lovins likes to point to—the drop in oil use in the early nineteen-eighties—is, at best, equivocal. As Lovins notes in his book, what made people "pay attention" to oil consumption was the 1973 Arab oil embargo and the second, even more severe 1979 oil shock. Part of the drop was due to structural shifts in the economy away from oil-intensive activities. Part of it was fuel substitution by both individual consumers and industry, as homeowners and factories switched from oil to, for example, natural gas. The largest part of it was increased fuel efficiency in both automobiles and buildings, led by the creation of federal auto efficiency standards in 1975. And, finally, part of it was a change in consumer behavior as Americans bought smaller cars and turned down their thermostats. Thus what Lovins offers as a demonstration that federal regulation and new taxes are unnecessary could just as plausibly be seen as evidence of exactly the opposite.

Lovins knows all these arguments and is unmoved by them. "Sometimes after I give a talk, some folks get irked that I talk only about solutions and not about problems," he told me. "And typically someone will get up and give a long riff about all the bad things happening and all the suffering in the universe, which is basically true. And the only way I've found to deal with that sincere and well-founded concern is to let the person run down after a while and then ask as gently as I can whether feeling that way makes them more effective.

"What I think people are most hungry for—and trying hardest to locate—is practical and profitable solutions. And that's where I can make a distinctive contribution. It's a very pragmatic approach."

After his speech, Lovins still had, by his accounting, eight hours of work remaining on a report that was due the following day. I went with him to his hotel to ask a few last questions. This time, when he opened the door the room was freezing; by turning down the heat he had apparently turned on the air-conditioner. I asked Lovins how his plan to save the world through energy efficiency could accommodate the open-ended nature of human desire. If, as he claims, conservation is profitable, what was to stop the profits from going straight toward more consumption?

"It doesn't automatically prevent that," he said. But, he added, "you might plow the money back into more efficiency rather than more powerboats and helicopter skiing. After all, you don't rewash your clean clothes in the cheaper-to-run washing machine, because your clothes are already clean. At some point, I think you get jaded by continuous trips to Bali.

"Your neighbors might point out that what you're doing is increasingly antisocial," he continued. "On a moral or spiritual level, at some point you may discover you're not all that happy having more stuff or more travel. Trying to meet nonmaterial needs by material means is stupid and futile. Every faith tradition that I know decries materialism.

"Markets are meant to be greedy, not fair. Efficient, not sufficient. They're very good at short-term allocation of scarce resources, but that's all they're good at. They were never meant to tell you how much is enough or how to fulfill the higher purpose of a human being."

It was getting late, and I was keeping Lovins from his report. As I prepared to leave, he recalled another line, this one from Wallace Stevens: "After the final no there comes a yes and on that yes the future world depends." ♦

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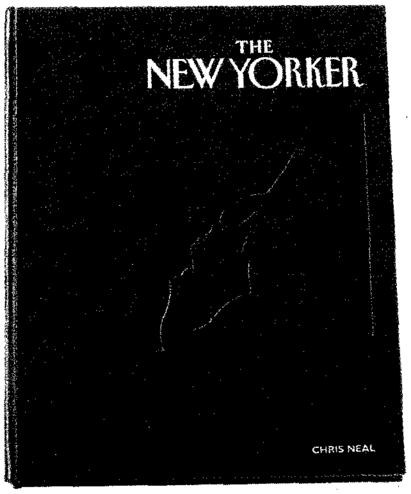

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

OAKY

BY IAN FRAZIER

> The mysterious stench that settled over Manhattan was long gone yesterday. But city officials were still trying to figure out where it had come from, and it led to an extraordinary round of speculation in which no theory seemed too implausible to consider. . . . "It was good theater for you," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg told reporters in Washington, where he testified before a Senate committee on domestic security. "And for Jay Leno, but after that—" he added, interrupting himself as he tried to keep those late-night talk show hosts and their punch lines straight. "Or was it Letterman? One of them." Senator Claire McCaskill, a Democrat from Missouri who appeared with the mayor at the news conference, was no help. "It might have been Leno or Letterman," she said.
>
> . . . the city and its surroundings might have been described the same way that author John Steinbeck described Cannery Row in Monterey, Calif., which he called "a poem, a stink, a grating noise."
>
> —*Two stories in the Times, January 10th.*

"No way it was Dave. Not in a million years. It's not something Dave would do."

"So you're saying, then, it wasn't Dave, so obviously it was Jay."

"I'm not saying about Jay one way or the other. All I can tell you, I watch Dave, I know Dave, and it wasn't Dave."

"To me, to be perfectly honest, it was more kind of black-and-white. Like, I don't know, an old 'Garry Moore Show.' "

"Or like the fat guy, used to do the commercials, remember—'What's the story, Jerry?' With the T-shirt?"

"No, I think I've come up with it—it was, you know, like, what's his name, Leo Weiser, the Automobile Club of America guy: 'Automobile Club of America, did you have to be *that good*?' Exactly like that."

"Maybe this is just me, but I close my eyes and I'm getting Thomas Campion (1567-1620), Elizabethan poet. The guy had smells, auras, indefinable what-have-yous floating around in the atmosphere *nailed*. 'A yellow frog, alas, will fright me so / As I should start and tremble as I go.' Who among us hasn't been that yellow frog. Or the guy that's scared of it, I mean."

"Amazingly, that's just who I was thinking of. Thomas Campion—yes."

"Wow, how weird is this? I was going to say him, too."

"All right, it's agreed: we call the Mayor, explain to him that the mysterious whatsit adrift in the collective nostril evokes, or four hundred years ago was most precisely evoked *by*, Thomas Campion, Elizabethan doctor as well as poet; so will Bloomberg therefore please lay the hell off Leno and Letterman, who were, on that particular day, probably nowhere *near* Manhattan . . ."

"I don't know, I'm still stuck on the 'What's the story, Jerry?' guy. Remember, at the end, his arms would go up, his T-shirt would rise, you'd see his belly button—'*That's* the story!' A whole kind of New York funkiness there."

"Hold on, please, I think we're going too metaphorical and far afield. Let's not lose touch with the actual sensory phenomenon involved. For me, the word I'd use to describe it is 'oaky.' There was a fullness, with a strong suggestion of oaken casks, some grace notes of cilantro, and just a hint of orange peel. And then a whole, whole lot of Bayonne."

[*Whistle of incoming artillery shells. Explosions.*]

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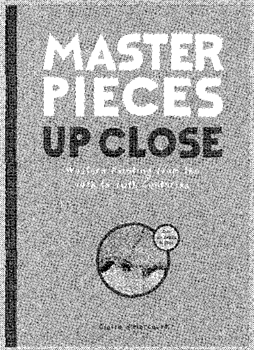

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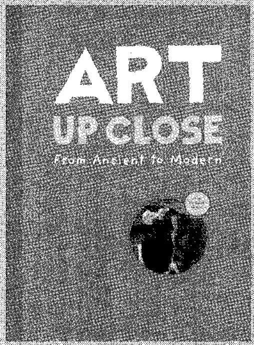

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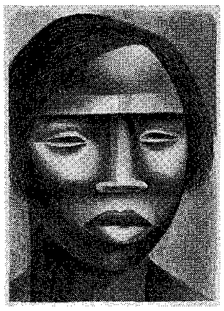

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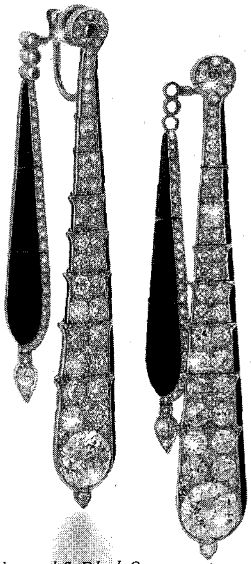

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ANNALS OF COMMERCE

MADE IN THE SHADE

How wasabi became the new black, and other tales from the color industry.

BY ERIC KONIGSBERG

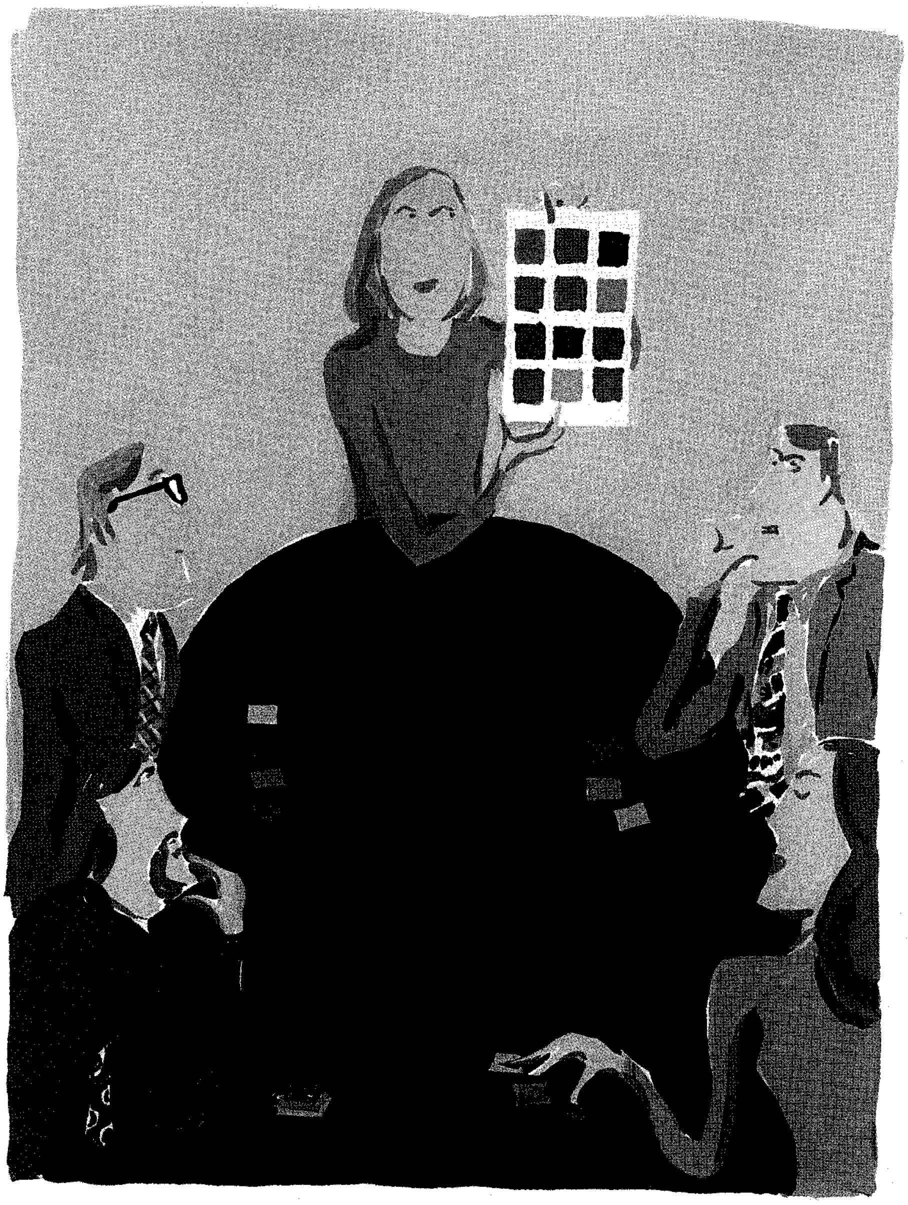
You could say that Leslie Harrington owes much of her success to the rise of wasabi green. Harrington is a color consultant who helps manufacturers determine the palette of their products and packages. Her clients have included Crayola, Pottery Barn, and Avon, and she's currently at work on a statistical survey for a pharmaceutical company, analyzing public reaction to different pill colors. "It depends on the context, of course—I wouldn't expect it to be a huge seller for lipstick—but the biggest color story over the past five years has been wasabi, or any green in that color family," she said. "Everywhere you look—cars, furniture, stationery—you see it: a light, yellow-based green."

Harrington, who is forty-four, lives with her husband and daughter in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, though you can hear her Canadian origins in her gently upward cadences. Her hair is a color she might describe as "mid-chroma, mid-value blond with fruitwood undertoning." She didn't invent wasabi green (a distinction that probably belongs to the Japanese), but she got in on the trend early. That was in 1998, at her previous job, as the director of color for the paint company Benjamin Moore, when she set about overhauling its entire contemporary palette.

The system hadn't been updated for twelve years, and the problem with it, Harrington recalled, was that its colors were "dirty"—in colorist's parlance, they had a good deal of gray in their composition. "The system had been developed when gray was trending really strong. The eighties—it was the height of the gray period, you know?" At the time, Harrington had just begun to notice colors in the yellow-green family coming into use. "It was introduced in small doses as very acid, more of a chartreuse, and it was big in fashion, but we tweaked it over time and it became sort of more . . . minty, more pistachio," she recalled. Two of its biggest popularizers were Pottery Barn (upholstery) and Martha Stewart (paint and housewares). Harrington's palette, which is still Benjamin Moore's basic contemporary color system, contains nearly fifty light, yellow-based greens, including Yew Green, Apple Green, Snow Cone Green, Spring Moss, Fresh Cut Grass, Lime Green, New Lime, Summer Lime, Eccentric Lime, Tequila Lime, Frosty Lime, Shimmering Lime, Neon Lime, Key Lime, Citra Lime, Fresh Lime, Lime Tart, Lime Froth, Lime Sorbet, and Limelight. By contrast, the previous palette had about twenty-five, including O'Reilly Green, Feel the Energy, and Sounds of Nature.

Harrington and her colleagues in the color business work for manufacturers of nearly every sort of product: paint, carpeting, pigment, fragrances, fabric, furniture, cars, sports equipment, electronics, home appliances, paper goods, building supplies, and even flowers. It's only the fashion world that operates independently of the color consultants—"though fashion's color decisions tend to trickle down to influence the rest of us," according to John Bredenfoerder, a design director for a brand-consulting firm in Cincinnati. In the color industry, wasabi's surge has been interpreted in a number of ways: as evidence of a back-to-nature trend in consumer aesthetics, spurred by a growing concern for the environment; as an indication that, since September 11th, public taste has run toward subtle, soothing colors; as a reflection of the ongoing luxury-spa craze (pale and clear blues, often referred to as "water colors," are also in this category).

"It also tells us how quickly something that's thought of as a no-no color can take off," Harrington told me. For decades, a running joke among color professionals had been the avocado-hued kitchen appliances of the nine-



Color forecasts for 2008 are influenced by the war in Iraq and the resurgence of India.

JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME

teen-seventies. (The refrigerators outlasted the color's popularity, creating a vicious backlash.) During the ensuing decades, all yellow-based greens—often known as "puke green" or "snot green"—were off limits.

Harrington was raised in Ontario, where her mother supported their family by working at a Benjamin Moore paint store (her father died when she was eight). "I grew up in what I call 'the matchy-poo era'—when women like my mother went to all this trouble to make sure that the towels matched the sheets, which matched my walls, which matched my wardrobe, which matched my car," she told me. In high school, she was too shy to order a pizza, and she flunked an English class for refusing to complete the public-speaking project. To help her overcome the problem, her mother began bringing her into the paint store every day and making her wait on customers, something she continued to do through college, at the nearby International Academy of Merchandising and Design.

Shortly before graduating, she got a call from Benjamin Moore's Canadian headquarters. The company was preparing to launch a North American road show to promote a new computerized color-matching system, and the person who was supposed to run the show had fallen ill. Harrington recalled, "Apparently, somebody in corporate said, 'How about that girl at the Toronto store? She knows everything.' "

Harrington has an M.B.A. from New York University and has recently earned her Ph.D., via a distance-learning program, in "color strategy," a discipline of her own design. But her first major contribution, when she was at Benjamin Moore, was to have invented "smooshing"—both the term and the technique. It involves applying sheets of plastic wrap to wet paint in order to create a marbled surface on walls. "I started the whole thing, put it in a book we sold in the stores, and it was huge in the eighties, when people were really painting their own rooms and making effects," she recalled. "It's got, like, sixty thousand hits on Google, and I never got a penny from it." She also has proprietary feelings about her terms "Color Sellability" and "Color Shopability."

One of Harrington's current projects is to develop a range of colors for a manufacturer of residential siding. The company, James Hardie Industries, which is based in the Netherlands but has American headquarters in California, is eager to use its fifteen-year color warranty as a selling point, but the longevity makes the choice of color that much more important.

"The risk calculations are greater the larger, more expensive, and more durable the product," Harrington told me. "The consumer is more risk-averse when it comes to choosing a color. This is the central challenge with all exteriors. It means we're working with a smaller segment of the color wheel. On the other hand, what good is colored siding if they don't have choices?" In some high-population-growth markets such as Houston, a Hardie house tends to be situated in a subdivision of Hardie houses. "And nobody wants to have the same color home as their next-door neighbors," Harrington said.

It bothers Harrington when people refer to her as a "tastemaker." "The industrial-design element of what I do is probably more critical than taste," she told me. Her background in light household construction goes back almost as long as her experience with paint. "When I was just out of college and my couch didn't fit in my living room, I got a circular saw and turned it into two reading chairs." She built by hand her work studio in Connecticut, in what was formerly her attic—from insulation to Sheetrock to cabinetry. For Christmas, she always asks for new power tools—

this year it was a good electric nail-gun (which she didn't receive). Still, her husband, an accountant whom she met when she was in Greece to speak at a convention, prefers to buy her things like jewelry or Versace handbags. "It makes me crazy," she said. "He thinks it's all nonsense, what I do, by the way."

Most scholars of color theory acknowledge that although our color likes and dislikes may have some innate basis—a study by the Cambridge psychologist Nicholas Humphrey found that even rhesus monkeys tended to stick to a consistent order of preference (blue, green, yellow, orange, and red)—they are also subject to manipulation. "It's easy to come up with really obvious colors that you know people will like because they've always liked them," Harrington said. "But it's much better if you can come up with something subtle and sophisticated—you know, like the orange that somebody who's not an orange person likes? Like that orange that Range Rover did last year only on one of their most expensive models? If you put a special color on a product with a higher price point, it becomes the class signifier."

VILLAGE MYTHOLOGY

Flickering lamplight, fanfare of trapped wings,
bears, and snakes darken into another Orissa night.
The sea might sweep up on the shore again
in a sudden aggressive embrace. And walls
of madness rise up to the skies in a malevolent dark.
Yet one's earth is never in real danger.

Firewood on their heads, a file of women
stagger along the last rain-wet road.
Suna, the faithful village wife, crawls
through darkness as she moves beyond birth and death
from one night of rape to another.

Here destiny goes nowhere, but is everywhere.
The real story she listens to from her children
is made up of school, books, and their bloodless pulp;
imagined loss somehow secretly feeds
her sense of herself.

The dropped anchor flounders in a sea without water.
In this forgotten sea, she is of the race
that can sing only of gods
who betray life with small embraces.

—*Jayanta Mahapatra*

Although the birth of industry-wide color marketing is often dated to 1915, when American dressmakers banded together to order fabrics in bulk from Paris because the First World War had limited France's exporting capacity, an earlier occurrence was in 1907 and involved the house-painting industry. That year, according to the architectural historian Christine B. Hilke, the Paint Manufacturers' Association of America launched an advertising campaign, in the hope of generating sales and controlling costs, by reducing the number of colors on offer. The campaign featured only "copper brown" and "copper verde," because those were predicted to be fashionable colors in women's clothing the following season. "In house painting it is women to whom we cater," an officer of the guild wrote in a promotional pamphlet. "If we can guide or educate the taste of the house-mistress in respect to the colors in which her dwelling is to be clad, we control the entire situation."

Color specialists enjoy trying to pinpoint when and where they first became aware of a particular trend. "The mauving of America began in the hospitality context, at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago, when they renovated in the eighties," said Ken Charbonneau, a color consultant who previously worked as Harrington's predecessor, and then her boss, at Benjamin Moore. "Believe it or not, it was pretty at first: rose, mauve, and gray—with a touch of teal. It was quickly in every dentist's office in America, and every hospital clinic. The worst thing about it was that it was huge in all these built-in laminates—commercial consoles, hotel dressers, reception desks. You couldn't get rid of it."

The accepted interpretation now is that the mauve moment reflected the eighties' collective grasping at understated "refinement": hence the "sophisticated" palette, built on a gray foundation that served to both tone the colors down and achieve a level of steeliness, which, in turn, signified modern science's triumph over nature. Hence, too, the permissive and shyly cosmetic quality of those roses and teals. "Those colors were a reaction to the excesses of the seventies—the avocados and harvest golds—which had celebrated nature in a way that people were suddenly feeling was too wild," Charbonneau said.

There's also a market-based incentive behind color trends: if a manufacturer makes last year's product in a new color, the product is perceived as new, and some consumers will feel the need to buy another one. Meanwhile, technological advances have accelerated the process of manufacturing, so that consumers are moving though product cycles more rapidly.

Because colors can influence consumer choices, Harrington is often asked to research the way people respond to various palettes. When Colorcon, an international maker of film coatings for pharmaceutical tablets, commissioned her to study the associations people have with pills of different colors, it may have been inspired by the branding triumphs of Viagra and Nexium. The popular recognition of both drugs is linked closely to their respective colors: "the little blue pill" and "the purple pill."

"I can only guess in those cases

whether color has anything to do with it," Harrington said. Indeed, given the intended function of the drug, "that blue"—Viagra is a chalky, medium-tone blue—"is a little bit safe," Lori Heron, a design director who consults for the pharmaceutical industry, told me. "It's a grounded, responsible color, but moving toward an aqua for a pill might be a more forward-thinking choice. That's where we're leaning right now." In 2002, when the manufacturers of Levitra were looking to position their drug to compete with Viagra, they decided (after considerable research) to make the pill orange. According to an article in *Fortune*, some focus groups found Viagra's blue to be chilly, whereas orange was "vibrant and energetic."

Harrington used a research firm to survey several thousand people, in twelve countries, about twenty-seven pill colors. She found that while lighter-value blues tend to be the most calming colors, respondents reported that pills in other hues—dark green in America, Great Britain, and Korea; medium green in Italy and Germany; brown in Japan—had the most calming effect. "So many colors mean different things from country to country," Harrington said. "Red pills in India evoke romance or happiness, but in Korea they mean romance or fear."

The blue of Viagra, meanwhile, was shown to have relatively few strong associations, positive or negative. "This makes me wonder if it isn't something of a blank slate," she said. "Viagra has come along, and they've been making the color their own." By the same reasoning, then, a light-purple pill—which, in every country surveyed, failed to make the top three colors for any attribute—presents a similar opportunity. "A *lavender* pill brand is very much out there for the taking," Harrington said.

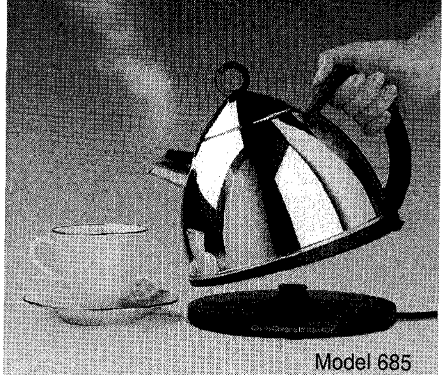
The institution that plays the greatest role in determining next year's big color is a trade organization known as the Color Marketing Group, which holds a twice-yearly forecasting convention. Harrington has belonged to C.M.G. for more than fifteen years, and last April, at the spring conference—held at a Hyatt Regency in Denver—she chaired several forecasting workshops. The first afternoon, she had a group of nine in-house color specialists, and, perhaps because this particular workshop was devoted to colors for use in people's houses, all of them were women. They sat at a long table in a converted suite. "So—colors, home," Harrington said. "What's everybody thinking?"

Catherine Wunch, a pigment specialist for BASF, folded her hands. "I see an influence from the military situation, and I think it's going to be with us for a while," she said. "I kind of see colors for 2008 as being grayed." Wunch, who has short hair in a square and businesslike cut, passed around a handful of color chips, in gray-blues, gray-browns, and a grayish pink. They joined several other clusters of colors affixed to a whiteboard.

Jill Liebson, a designer for a fabric-printing company in Florida, seemed to agree. "I think we're going to go much deeper than before, because we aren't living in optimistic times," she said. "And in the home people want deep safety."

All participants had been instructed to bring in samples (chips or swatches or even photo spreads from magazines) of five or six colors they thought would be big in two or three years' time, and a corresponding list of trends, socioeconomic or aesthetic, that they expected to bring this about. Among the influences they discussed were the war in Iraq and the attendant oil crisis; a certain ambivalence about technology's hold on our lives; the fact that the 2008 Olympics will be held in Beijing; the fact that India has become a player in the global economy; and the enduring purchasing power of both the first wave of baby boomers, who are beginning to turn sixty, and the younger generation of shoppers ever hungry for well-designed "discount-luxe" goods (a trend that was somehow tied to the popularity of reality TV).

"Some of the Asian markets are being totally opened up, and I see camel and earthier greens coming back," Robin Culbreath, a fortyish color consultant from Minnesota, said. ("Fabrics and paper products especially. I just did an amazingly adorable line of Post-it pads for 3M.") She wore a turquoise kimono over a pair of dungarees. "There's really



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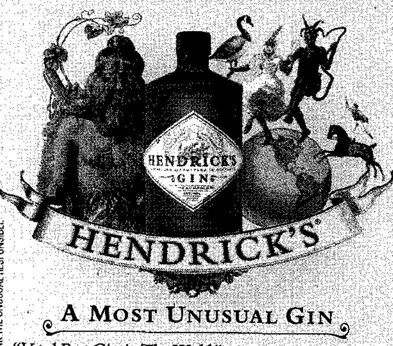

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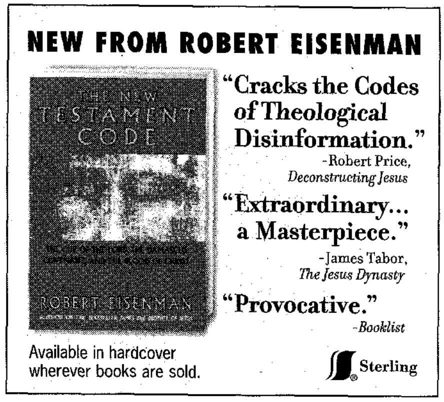
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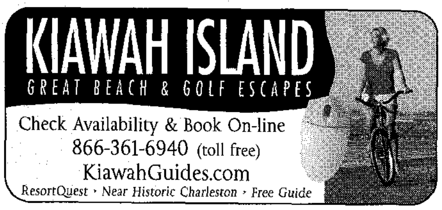
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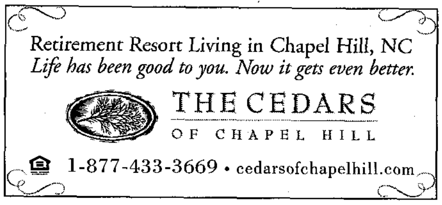
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cool stuff coming out of Mongolia. Their textiles are heavily influenced by these deep, inky blues."

In another workshop, several stories down, Melanie Wood, an independent consultant who spent many years with Mannington, a New Jersey-based flooring company, spoke about "life shoppers—adults in their thirties and forties who keep trying out new lives without committing to anything. I call them 'yeppies,' for 'young, experience-seeking professionals.' They want a life that is protected from feeling bad, but they're not sure how to get that. And this is a generation of adults that has their parents' money to fall back on." She smiled sheepishly—she has two grown children—and went on, "Colorwise, I see two things happening: neutrals and a momentary insight into luxury and richness, which will be reflected in mid-toned jewel tones."

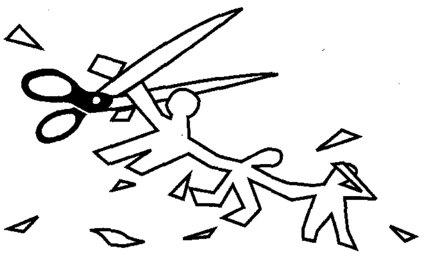
C.M.G., which has been around since 1962 and has some eleven hundred members worldwide, prides itself on being not only the largest color forecasting group but the most accurate. Since its forecasts draw on the opinions of nearly two hundred practitioners, this involves something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The forecasts are divided into two broad palettes, each with its own annual convention: in the fall, the focus is on "contract colors," which are for commercial-use products such as, say, shopping-mall floors, hospital curtains, or cubicle surfaces; the spring conference is devoted to "consumer colors," for the sorts of things that consumers buy. The industry-specific forecasting groups at the Denver convention included Transportation (cars, mostly), Action and Recreation (sports equipment), and Visual Communication (packaging, logos, paper products, graphics).

Charges of "color collusion" have sometimes been levied at C.M.G. (As a 1999 issue of the architecture and design magazine *Metropolis* had it, "614 marketers at the Montreal Sheraton have already decided on your next favorite color. Will you buy it?") But the group doesn't go so far as to advise reproducing its palette precisely. "It's a directional forecast, with suggested names," Melanie Wood told me. "The idea is for these professionals to go home and interpret it in a way that's appropriate to what they're making. After all, it wouldn't do any of us much good if we went back to the companies we work for and designed products in the same colors as our competitors, who happened to get the very same idea here." Perhaps not, but in the past some automotive-industry designers were said to be so guarded that they brought in "decoy" colors to propose, hoping to throw off their rivals. That problem has been rectified by assigning participants from the same industry to different workshops.

C.M.G. bills nonmembers seven thousand dollars for the year's forecasts: printed cards with glossy color chips and an accompanying report. Even C.M.G. members are forbidden, for the first eight weeks after a new palette is declared, to use the forecasted colors in any kind of public forum, such as in newsletters or on the Web; after that, the group's rules state, "generic information" about the colors may be shared by members, "but they may NOT communicate specific color references or notations."

In order to be considered for the 2008 forecast card, a color must not have been on the C.M.G. palette (at least, not for the same industry group) in recent years. Several candidates represented only a slight evolution from something on the previous year's palette. For example, Thunder, a blue-gray predicted for 2008, is based on a 2007-palette color called Mettle but is lighter and bluer, "in respect to Mother Nature and natural metals," according to last year's post-conference report.

Over the course of three days, subsequent committees produce a final palette. A spectrophotometer is typically used to "read" each color and assign it the proper notations in six indexing systems, such as Archroma (which works best with fabric dyes) or RAL (which is used for paint). Within a couple of



months, the color samples are printed in rows on an eleven-by-sixteen-inch card.

Later that first day, Harrington moved downstairs to a banquet-sized hall to run a "color-consolidation steering committee" session—the equivalent of a second round. The experience level of the average person in the room went up a few years, but some people had trouble justifying the inclusion of their favored colors. "If it doesn't have strong influences that we can identify, it doesn't get up there on the board," Harrington said, as the group before her mulled over a pale brown.

"The wood tones are going more yellow," Robin Culbreath said.

"It's camel as leather, camel as skin," C. J. Volk, who produces her own line of high-end paints in Tucson, added. She spun around to face Culbreath and raised her arm in mock self-congratulation.

"Those aren't influences, you guys," Harrington objected. "You're describing the color." Two popular dark colors, one brownish-orange and the other more purple-burgundy, ran into the same hurdle, and Harrington pressed the group to identify cultural trends behind the emerging palette.

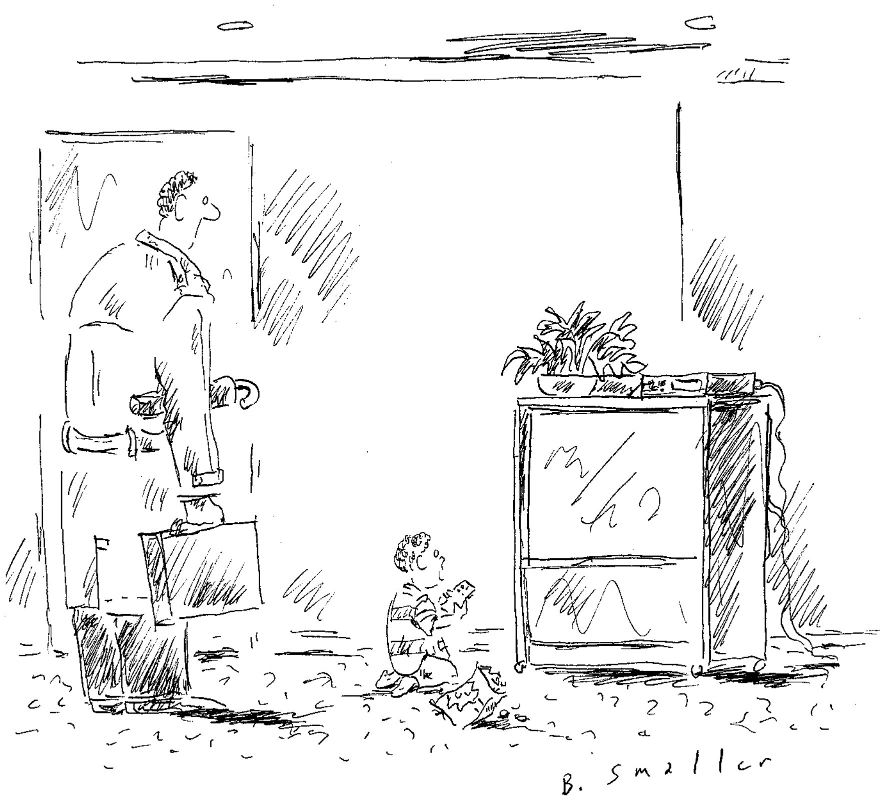
"Ethnicity and immigration," Volk said.

"Multicultural," Rebecca Ewing, a boutique color forecaster from Decatur, Georgia, said.

Harrington was still skeptical. "O.K., so is it different ethnic groups for these two?"

"The brown-orange is more Indian," Ewing said. "The other one is Asia." She thought about this for a moment. "And Eastern Europe, Russia, and Turkey."

The brownish orange was one of the shades that survived to the end of the session and would go before the next consolidating panel. When it came time to name the color, Cimarron, which somebody said sounded like Spanish for "cinnamon" (though it's actually Spanish for "wild, untamed") was well received, until Volk told the group that Cimarron was also the name of the subdivision she lives in. They settled on Adobada.



"I've already told Mom about my day—ask her."

In one group after another, forecasters championed the same color families and the same modifications of currently popular colors. Both blue and red got darker (with Cosmitech and Regalia, respectively), bright orange and various shades of turquoise were on the wane, the purples went from dusty lilacs to something very dark and baroque (Forbidden Plum), and green, while ever popular, was represented less by acidic and "botanical" hues and more by muted neutrals. The final 2008 palette of twenty-four colors—announced, with fanfare, in a large auditorium after an executive-committee all-nighter—was dominated by "nature colors." There were eight hues described as "fusions of yellow, green, and brown," another six in the green and blue-green families, and a couple of warm earth tones, including Brokeback Bronze.

The report accompanying the palette describes Buddha, one of the fusion colors and a nominee from the Visual Communication sector, as having been derived "from Asia and the Middle East. . . . This color brings depth and richness to the forecast, and can be communicated in a variety of finishes . . . matte, metallic, and varnish." A description of Mineral Springs, from the Home group, is "a good blue gone bad. A slate-infused gray with watery undercurrents, this color is influenced by nature and tech." A color called Soul is characterized as a "sophisticated" violet: "The spirituality of this color spans many cultures and offers comfort for questing minds and hearts in our erratic world."

Hardie, the siding company, brought Harrington in as a consultant after it suffered a self-inflicted color disaster. In 2002, the company had introduced siding with a finish called ColorPlus, in a range of shades chosen without much thought by some people in the manufacturing department. It bombed.

Previously, Hardie siding had been sold only in primed, uncolored planks. "We'd wanted to do colored board because the profit margins are higher, but we had no idea what we were doing," Rob Thomsen, a Hardie manager who has been supervising the product's relaunch, told me. "Somebody here had looked into the colors that vinyl siding came in"—Hardie siding is made of fibre cement, and costs significantly more than vinyl—"and said, 'These are the most popular colors. We'll make those.' It was a bunch of spec-house tans."

Harrington began by visiting the biggest markets the company had targeted, in order to check out housing styles and survey local developers and builders. "It's a matter of knowing which colors and materials are typical of a given market, and even getting a sense of the geography, the light, the climate," she said. "The idea was to come up with several regional palettes that could be produced independently."

"Regional patterns can't always be explained by anthropology, but they exist," she went on. "Birmingham, for example, is a heavy brick market, so even the sided houses tend to be brown or brick red. It's a very dark story. You still see more colors in Birmingham than in Dallas, but the colors in Dallas are more diverse—grays, greens, yellows. Tampa has more stucco, so it skews very light. Washington, D.C., is beigeville."

In time, Harrington put together a provisional palette of twenty-six colors, which Hardie has been introducing over the past year: three blues, six greens, two reds, and fifteen earth tones. "They all relate to each other, which means they share at least one of three things," she said. "One is the undertone of the hue, which is a measure of how much yellow or blue it has in it. All colors have one or the other, even if you don't think you can see it. The other two are chroma and value." Chroma measures the brightness or dullness of a color. Value refers to a color's position on the light-dark scale and measures how much light a color reflects.

"With exteriors, I tend to stay closer to the center of the color-space wheel," she said. "This means the value is fairly light, and they're not too saturated, because we see houses in direct sunlight, and they always look brighter."

In the more expensive segment of the new-construction market, Harrington said, the trend is toward "sophisticated" neutrals. "It's often difficult for people to describe the colors," she told me one day over lunch. We were on the Upper East Side, where she had an appointment to meet with a prospective client. "You heard it at C.M.G.—'It's kind of a taupey beige with a little bit of green in it.' The more high-end the color, the more colors have gone into it and the more words you use to describe it. When it's a lower-end neutral, people just say 'tan.' "

She pointed to a set of pale ceramic salt and pepper shakers on our table and asked what color I would call them. I told her off-white.

"Well, every color but white is off-white," she said, and paused. "That's a color joke."

Hey Dillweed!
Kanin

Bad Fences

The only parts of the country for which the choice of twenty-six colors seemed insufficient were on the Southeastern coast and along the Gulf of Mexico, so Harrington began to think about adding several colors to form a "coastal palette." Around seven o'clock one morning last June, in Rockport, Texas, Harrington was riding in the back seat of a pickup truck driven by Tab Haley, a Hardie salesman responsible for southern Texas. He's fifty-one, has a sandy mustache and crow's-feet, and wore loose-fitting pants and a canvas fishing shirt. Next to him sat Brian Romike, his district sales manager, just in from Dallas. Romike, who is thirty-four, is tall and burly and had on black slacks, sturdy black lace-up shoes, and a striped golf shirt. Harrington wore white pants, a pink linen blouse, and sandals with floral appliqués, and carried a shocking-pink Burberry handbag with topstitching.

Romike said that the Hardie product accounts for about thirteen per cent of the roughly eleven billion square feet of exterior building material that goes up in America every year, but it gets a bad rap. "We don't like to be classified in the siding category," he said. "People hear that word, they think of vinyl or aluminum"—the stuff of inexpensive, prefabricated housing—"and that's a stigma we have, unfortunately. We're a premium product. It doesn't rot like wood does from moisture, it doesn't buckle or burn, termites can't get to it. Plus, you get a clad look"—cladding is the term for overlapped planks—"not that vinyl look." Haley said that vast segments of his sales territory are "mostly Hispanic, which means mostly brick. Hardie looks like wood, and their connotation of a wooden home is a cheap home."

Haley said he thought stucco posed the most significant challenge to Hardie's improving its market share in coastal regions. "But Carolina's a heavy vinyl market, and vinyl people were always out front in terms of color," he added.

"Yes, and vinyl just took a giant leap," Harrington said. "For a long time, vinyl was just interested in your twelve best beiges. Now, Alcoa's expanded their color range to, like, seven hundred colors. They've taken a paint mentality."

"Dude, in my opinion, that's desperation," Romike said.

Harrington raised her eyebrows. "The Hardie boys are such Type A's," she said.

Rockport, which is primarily a second-home community, was selected for a visit because it represents one extreme of the color bell curve. As Haley turned onto one of Rockport's main drags, we passed single-story motor inns painted pink and mint green, a bright-turquoise bait stand, a sky-blue seashell shop, and a tripartite storefront segmented in custard yellow, aquamarine, and deep coral. Later came a row of concrete bungalows painted bright purple, yellow, and blue, then two fishing shacks in electric green and periwinkle. Harrington photographed them all.

"This will be good for a historical perspective," she said. "These are older houses. I want to see how color evolved within the community. Maybe there's an opportunity to do some kind of regression palette." Haley and Romike exchanged appreciative nods.

The tour included five new developments in Rockport and nearby Port Aransas. The builders were at most of the sites, sweating in the heat. At one site, a crew of men had put up a row of town-house condominiums, and the exteriors were already hung with new ColorPlus siding. The colors they'd used were Sail Cloth and Woodland Cream. "This is the first time I've seen my colors in action," Harrington said. "This is my baby all grown up."

Before she left home, Harrington had made a new "exploration palette" consisting of a grid of chips: several light shades each of blue, green, and yellow and some colors in the light-brown family. The brighter blues and greens quickly emerged as the developers' favorites, and earth tones were roundly disliked. "No disparagement, but the browns and the mustard, I don't think those would be popular," one architect said. "Of course, we need a brown because some people just can't receive the water colors. They can't let go and relax."

She found another developer, Byron Pratt, standing on the porch of a house in Royal Sands, his ninety-unit subdivision, with property values ranging from about four hundred and fifty thousand dollars to one million dollars for larger homes on the two man-made lagoons or the beach. He had a mustache, shoulder-length hair, tortoiseshell sunglasses secured by Croakies, and a T-shirt that said "Sharkey's Pro Fishing Tournament."

Even for the area, his houses were painted in unusually fanciful colors. There were about fifty distinct shades, seemingly anything you might see on an Easter egg. Harrington asked how he had gone about choosing the colors. "I just go through the pastels on the Sherwin-Williams chart and change them a little bit," he said. He pointed proudly at a coral-colored house nearby. "We just matched that off a Peach Bacardi ad."

"Are there any restrictions on color?"

"Yeah, the homeowners' association," Pratt said. "That's me."

Harrington asked Pratt to have a look at her exploration palette. "I could use a lot of these, but you don't have a real powder blue in there," he said. "And I wouldn't mind a pink."

Everybody Harrington asked thought her colors were too safe. When she returned home to Connecticut, she got out all her fan decks—she relies on about a dozen indexing systems—and began to consider more tropical-looking blues, greens, and yellows, and then a few pinks and light oranges.

"I'll give them more chroma and see what comes back," she said a week later, in her studio. "I'm beginning to think the coastal region, at least in Texas, is an outlier." She picked up an X-Acto knife and began cutting chips with amazing rapidity: Phthalo Green, Miami Ice, Buttercup, Flamingo. These were not the colors she had expected to use, but how could she argue with what she'd seen? "I've developed this process," she said. "I really try to validate and support the decisions with hard data and field evidence."

She paused to look at a pile of chips that she'd cut because they matched a slew of photographs from one of her trips, of different houses painted in shades of a color that brought to mind the contents of an old lady's compact, or perhaps a pair of flesh-colored pantyhose. "This color concerns me," she said. With some hesitation, she pushed the chips to the edge of her drafting table, letting a few of them fall to the floor. "We're not doing that one," she declared. "We're not doing that color, because it's *ugly*. Data is data, but I'm making an executive decision on pinky-beige." ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

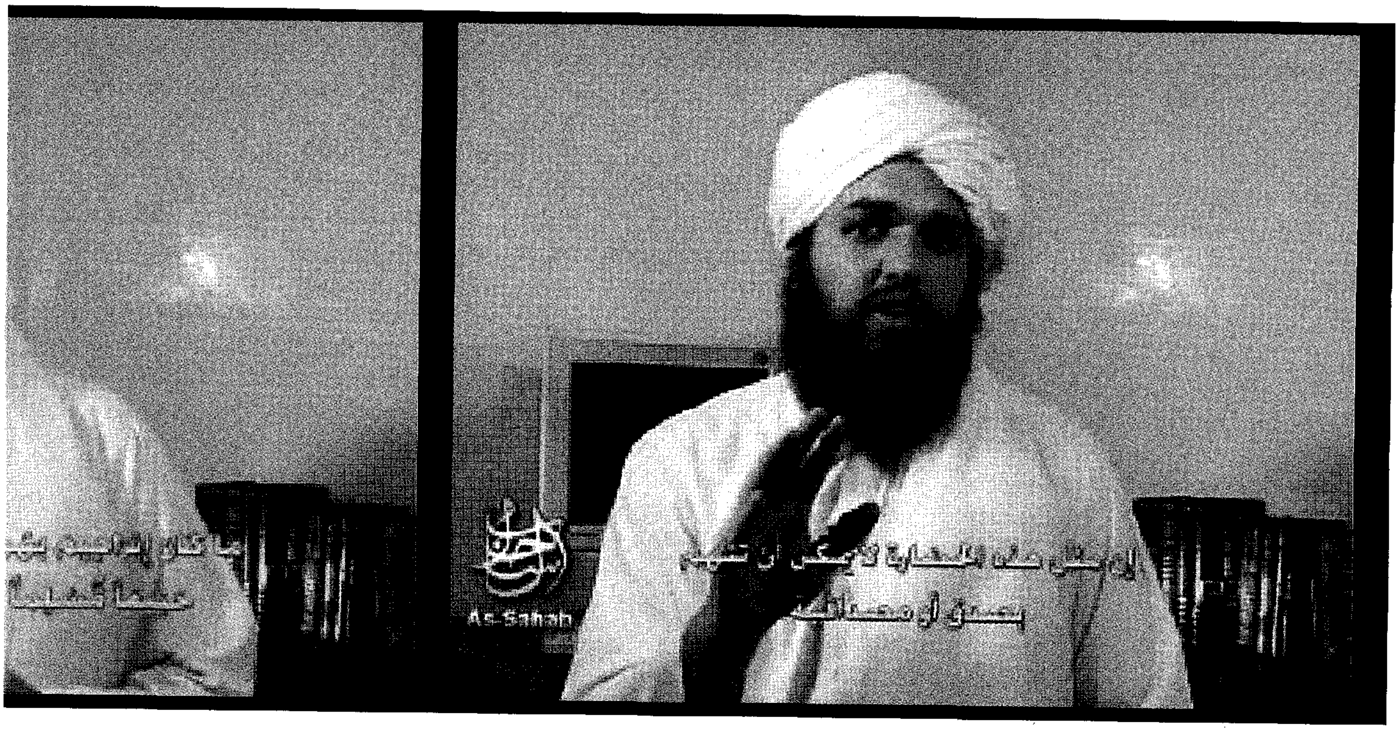
AZZAM THE AMERICAN

The making of an Al Qaeda homegrown.

BY RAFFI KHATCHADOURIAN

Adam Gadahn, the first American to be charged with treason in more than fifty years, was born in Oregon, grew up in rural California, and converted to Islam at the age of seventeen. He is now twenty-eight. No one who knew him before his religious awakening ever thought that he would join Al Qaeda, and many people who knew him after he did are still perplexed. And yet, in a short time, Gadahn has become one of Osama bin Laden's senior operatives. (He is believed to be hiding in the North Waziristan region of Pakistan.) He is a member of Al Qaeda's "media committee," and his responsibilities are thought to include those of translator, video producer, and cultural interpreter. Primarily, though, Gadahn is a spokesperson, a role he performs with tremendous conviction. He has addressed the United States in five videos, most of which reach a wide audience on the Internet and, in some form or another, have been discussed on the evening news. Last year, shortly before the fifth anniversary of September 11th, Al Qaeda's leadership featured Gadahn in a video titled "An Invitation to Islam." The video began with an introduction from Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's main theoretician, who referred to Gadahn tenderly as a brother and as "a perceptive person who wants to lead his people out of darkness into the light." Zawahiri implored his Western audience to listen to Gadahn, even to follow his example. Al Qaeda had never before given one of its members, let alone an American, an endorsement so intimate and direct.

There is a certain stylistic uniformity to all forms of propaganda, but the personality of the propagandist is never far from the surface. Bin Laden's murmuring voice belies the contempt in his words. Zawahiri speaks in the confident, rhythmic clauses of a master strategist. Adam Gadahn, though he tries to adopt the composure of a statesman, exudes the zealotry of a convert, and of youth. Sometimes his syntax is so baroque, his sentiment so earnest, that he sounds like a character from "The Lord of the Rings." "The call has gone out," he proclaimed in one video. "The era of jihad and resistance has dawned in all its glory." Mostly, though, Gadahn sounds angry. In 2005, with his head wrapped in a black turban and his face covered with a black veil, he warned, "We love nothing better than the heat of battle, the echo of explosions, and slitting the throats of the infidels." Last July, while discussing civilian casualties in Iraq, he said, "It's hard to imagine that any compassionate person could see pictures, just pictures, of what the Crusaders did to those children, and not want to go on a shooting spree at the Marines' housing facilities at Camp Pendleton." In a feature-length Al Qaeda documentary that was released on the Internet on September 11, 2006, Gadahn referred to the United States as "enemy soil," and celebrated the September 11th hijackers as "dedicated, strong-willed, highly motivated individuals."



“An Invitation to Islam” allowed Americans to observe Gadahn at length. For nearly forty-five minutes, he urged the people of the United States to discard their myriad religious and political beliefs, adopt an uncompromising form of Islam, and “join the winning side.” This time, he wore a pristine white robe and a white turban, and he was seated in what appeared to be a modern office; beside him were a flat-screen Compaq computer monitor, a neat row of books, and a full glass of tea. Gadahn has brown eyes, a prominent brow, and thick brown hair. His skin was tanned. A long beard of tight curls puffed outward along the sides of his full cheeks. He is nearly six feet tall, and is thought to weigh more than two hundred pounds. Gadahn cannot keep his body still when he speaks. He points his finger upward, or wields a copy of the Koran, or swipes his hand in front of his chest to dismiss an erroneous idea. “Time is running out,” Gadahn said, waving an arm up and down. “So make the right choice before it’s too late and you meet the dismal fate of thousands before you.”

Adam Gadahn’s nom de guerre is Azzam al-Amriki (Azzam the American). He can fluently recite the Koran in classical Arabic, and, since the late nineteen-nineties, when he joined the jihad, his English has acquired a vaguely Middle Eastern accent. At times, he speaks in what might be called Jihadlish—a peculiar fusion of American vernacular and militant Islamist theory. Gadahn may be the first Al Qaeda operative to lace a religious threat with a reference to Monopoly. (“If you die as an unbeliever in battle against the Muslims, you’re going straight to hell, without passing Go.”) Or to adopt the bluster of a barroom pundit. (“Whoever takes over for Bush probably won’t have the guts to bring the troops home.”) Once, referring to Abu Jahal, an early enemy of Islam known as the Father of Ignorance, Gadahn said, “I can’t forget the day, when, as I was praying a prescribed prayer with one of the brothers in a shopping-center parking lot in suburban America, a man sped by in his sports-utility vehicle shouting from his open window, ‘Worship Jesus, your Lord.’ The gas guzzler, cell phone, and college diploma notwithstanding, one couldn’t help but be reminded of Abu Jahal in the seventh century, abusing the Prophet while he prayed.”

In May, 2004, the F.B.I. announced that Gadahn was wanted for questioning, and in October, 2005, several weeks after he threatened an attack on Los Angeles in a video, the Justice Department indicted him under seal for providing material support to Al Qaeda. Treason was added to that charge in October, 2006, following Zawahiri’s endorsement in “An Invitation to Islam” and Gadahn’s reference to the United States as “enemy soil.” Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty, who announced the new charge in Washington, stressed that Gadahn had “made a choice” to side with bin Laden. “He chose to join our enemy and to provide it with aid and comfort by acting as a propagandist for Al Qaeda,” McNulty said. “Terrorists create fear and intimidation through extreme violence. They want Americans to live and walk in fear. They want to demoralize us. That’s why propaganda is so important to them, and why facilitating that propaganda is such an egregious crime.” Gadahn’s name was added to the government’s list of most-wanted terrorists, and a million-dollar bounty was offered for information leading to his capture.

Gadahn is the ultimate “home-grown”—a term used by scholars and government officials for Western citizens who are “picking up the sword of the idea,” as one senior F.B.I. official put it, and are willing to attack their own societies, even martyr themselves if

In “An Invitation to Islam,” a 2006 Al Qaeda video, Gadahn betrays the zealotry of a youthful convert.

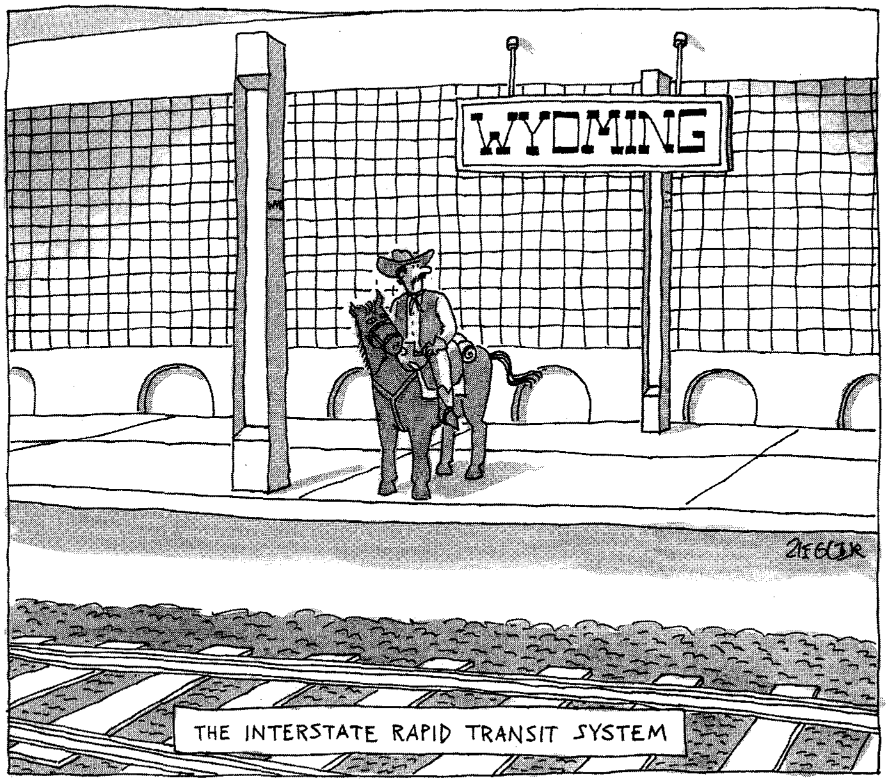
required. Most homegrowns are second- or third-generation Muslims, but a few—and perhaps the most puzzling—are converts. Jose Padilla (the so-called Dirty Bomber) and Richard Reid (the so-called Shoe Bomber) are well-known examples. In 2004, Ryan Anderson, a Muslim convert in the Washington Army National Guard, was convicted of attempting to provide Al Qaeda with military intelligence. (During a military sting, Anderson said, "I wish to defect from the United States. I wish to join Al Qaeda, train its members, and conduct terrorist attacks.") John Walker Lindh, who grew up in Marin County, California, never plotted against America, but he joined and fought for the Taliban.

Homegrowns in the United States are especially rare and are poorly understood; most of the scholarship about them is only a few years old. And yet, because of their cultural literacy, and because of the mobility that their citizenship provides, they are potentially the most dangerous of terrorists. This fear has recently propelled a small number of specialists to search for a pattern behind homegrown radicalization and recruitment. Their research has led them to examine the sociology of cults, the psychology of fanaticism, even the formation of defunct political terror groups like West Germany's Red Army Faction. Adam Gadahn's transformation into Azzam al-Amriki may turn out to be a valuable case study in this effort. "The thing that concerns me with Adam Gadahn's situation is, how did it happen?" Randy Parsons, who ran the F.B.I.'s counterterrorism division in Los Angeles from 2002 to 2006, told me. "How did he convert, not to Islam, because obviously what he is into is not mainstream Islam, but to a particularly virulent, violent, radical view of Islam? How does somebody get to that?"

Adam Gadahn was raised on a farm in Southern California, near a small, unincorporated settlement in Riverside County called Winchester. The land is hidden among dirt roads and eucalyptus trees in the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountains. Its forty acres are windswept and dry—suffering from what Steinbeck called "bony soil." Adam's mother, Jennifer, is from Pennsylvania. His father, Phil, grew up in nearby Orange County. When the couple settled on the property, more than twenty-five years ago, they decided to raise goats. They built a cabin and strove to be self-sufficient. They had no running water in their home and produced their own electricity, from solar panels. For years, they did not own a telephone. They did not even have a mailing address; they drove to the post office in Winchester for their mail. They hoped that by avoiding the chaotic world of cities and commerce, by living in isolation and austerity, they might discover a fragment of an American Eden.

Like Adam, Phil Gadahn had taken on a new name and identity as a young man. He was born Philip Pearlman, the son of a prosperous Jewish physician and his Protestant wife, in Santa Ana. In the nineteen-sixties, while studying at the University of California at Irvine, Phil was a prominent figure in the local countercultural movement. He wore his hair long, and grew a beard. He edited the student newspaper and encouraged its reporters to tackle issues like free speech. He was passionate about psychedelic rock, played electric guitar, and organized musical "happenings": improvisational sessions involving a shifting cast of musicians. Joe Sidore, who recorded Phil's most famous happening, "The Beat of the Earth," in 1967, described Phil as "just a gentle, peaceful soul. He emoted this charisma. He was so Christ-like—I shouldn't even say that—he was so *gentle.* He attracted, and was attracted to, certain kinds of people, and those kinds of people were exactly the same way he was. He never changed his ideals." Friends recall Pearlman as a lovable contrarian, a perfectionist who was slow to trust others. "His nature is very cautious," Sidore said. "He'll kind of look at you from the corner of his eye. 'Suspicious' is probably a better word—that's first and foremost his nature." (Adam's parents and other family members have largely refused to speak to the press.)

One day, while walking near the ocean, Pearlman had a religious epiphany. As Adam described it in an essay he wrote after his conversion to Islam, "My father was raised agnostic or atheist, but he became a believer in One God when he picked up a Bible left on the beach." As Pearlman opened the Bible and began to read it, he became aware of a divine presence. The experience affected him deeply, and he alluded to it in his music. Some of his religious ideas were evident in an album he made in 1975 called "Relatively Clean Rivers." Pearlman's lyrics evoke a world that has strayed from divine truth into Babylon-like confusion. He describes a "vast Orwellian wilderness" and the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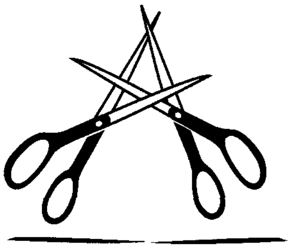
"journey we all must take" within it to achieve "relative perfection in our own special tiny corner of the universe"—a journey not unlike his own.

The beliefs expressed in "Relatively Clean Rivers" were not all personal. Pearlman called for peace in the Middle East ("hoping we can all get together, the Arabs and the Jews and melt down weapons into water sprinklers, tractors, shovels, and hoes"), but he seemed to regard the world's governments as too tainted by avarice and hypocrisy to achieve it. "Too many countries with a head full of gold," he sang, and he warned that, on a planet plagued by war and famine, "God sent the message down to try to bring us to his side; there's no place left to run, my friend, there's no place left to hide." Several lines from "Relatively Clean Rivers" seem to have held special meaning for him. Rich Haupt, a record collector who became a friend of Pearlman's in the nineties, recalled a conversation in which Phil quoted a lyric from the album. "You know, Rich," he said, "'We all throw our money into the streets. Whose face do you see on the coin? Not God's.'"

Several years after Phil and Jennifer married, in the mid-seventies, they changed their surnames to Gadahn. The name refers to the Biblical warrior Gideon—Gid'on, in Hebrew—who, with the aid of trumpets and clay jars, defeated Israel's enemies. In one Old Testament account, Gideon denounced idolatry and, when he was asked to become king, said, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." (In the liner notes to "Relatively Clean Rivers," Pearlman wrote, "We expect some sort of absolute dictatorship, an absolute monarchy to be exact, with no privileged people or persons whatsoever, except maybe God.") Pearlman used different first names—Sef, Saif, Seth, or Phil—on different occasions, and adjusted Christianity according to his spiritual needs. In his essay, Adam explained that his father "disregards the Trinity."

Three years after the recording of "Relatively Clean Rivers," Phil and Jennifer Gadahn were living in Oregon when Adam, their first child, was born. They gave him the middle name Yahiye, after the Arabic name for John the Baptist, who is believed by Muslims to be a prophet. When Adam was very young, the Gadahns moved to the property in Riverside County. Phil worked as a handyman, and every year he sold about thirty or forty goats at local markets, including some run by Muslims. (Occasionally, Muslims declined to buy the goats, considering them insufficiently *halal*.) He refused to sell his animals to people who he thought would slaughter them inhumanely.



As a child, Adam was shy, bookish, and by all accounts exceptionally bright. His grandfather would sometimes boast that he could read portions of an encyclopedia by the age of six. The Gadahns home-schooled Adam and his younger siblings, two sisters and a brother, but they also gave them opportunities to make friends. When Adam was twelve or thirteen, he played Little League baseball. Carol Koltuniak, whose son was on the same team, remembered that Gadahn was quiet and easygoing but not a natural athlete. "He definitely didn't want to be doing what he was doing," she said. "He was very much a loner." But he was also persistent. Adam attended every practice and every game, accompanied by his family. "They seemed very happy in their life style," Koltuniak said. Sometimes they would bring goat cheese and share it with other families in the stands.

Adam also joined several Christian homeschool support groups. (At the time, nearly all such groups in the region were Christian.) He dutifully attended meetings for nearly eight years, until he was about seventeen. Looking back on his experience after his conversion to Islam, he criticized the other children's "blind dogmatism" and "charismatic wackiness." By the time he turned fifteen, he had found another way to reach out to people beyond the farm. It was through an obscure musical subculture called death metal.

Death metal is a severe offshoot of heavy metal, a reaction to the superficiality of eighties popular culture. In the early nineties, bands that played death metal considered themselves part of an élite vanguard. They tuned their guitars in unconventional ways, and some, influenced by classical musicians, composed songs that required high degrees of discipline and technical virtuosity to play. Onstage, artists often wore sweatpants to demonstrate their athleticism and lack of pretense; the genre's signature vocal style is a heavy growling chant. ("We like it when it's simply rotten," one musician told me.) It is a subculture in love with its offensiveness, and obsessive about guarding its artistic purity.

Phil Gadahn "wasn't particularly crazy about it," Rich Haupt said, but had he been able to look past the dark aesthetic he might have understood his son's interest in the music. "Death metal is an extremist movement," Spinoza Ray Prozak, a former death-metal d.j. who knew Adam, told me. "We're people who don't like modern society. We think it's a path to death, doom, destruction, horror; it is part of the moral way we view the universe. A lot of death-metal songs are about disease, especially the kind of disease that strikes from within, incapacitates you, and there is no way to fight it, and you have to wait for it to slowly absorb you. A lot of songs are about paralysis, injury, necrotic diseases." Where Phil Gadahn in his music focussed on redemption, death metal focussed on decay. Members of the genre generally profess to reject Christianity, but they do so within a religious framework, using the language and imagery of paganism or Satanism, rather than of atheism. Fans who outgrow the music, as most do, often enough become religious.

It's unclear when Gadahn first encountered death metal, but by 1993 he had decided to learn as much about it as he could. Many of its followers, he found, were cerebral teen-agers like him. They were searching, not so much for a way to release their rage but for an experience that was authentic and powerful. "Where heavy metal gets a lot of the guys who lift weights and punch out beer cans, death metal is a really interesting combination of people, but it's a lot of just nerd," Prozak told me. Gadahn bought copies of small alternative magazines that included lists of fans who wanted to trade albums or mix tapes. He wrote to people on the lists, and the envelopes that came back were stuffed with cassettes and slips of paper containing the names and addresses of still more fans who wanted to correspond. "He was probably in contact with, minimum, several hundred people worldwide," Prozak said. "He took it very seriously. He read up on the music, he researched it as best he could. And he went from a guy who had about ten albums and thought it was neat to a guy who had access to most of the genre." At the time, the Internet was not yet in widespread use, and the death-metal underground must have seemed both exclusive and far-reaching. More important, its correspondence network made geography irrelevant. It was a world that Gadahn could belong to.

To the teen-agers in the metal underground who got to know Adam Gadahn, he remained an elusive figure. As one friend recalled, he was "a voice on the phone, a couple of tapes in the mail, some letters." A few of his pen pals remember that he was overly earnest; others said that he was goofy. He talked about social issues, or about the Disney comic books featuring Scrooge McDuck, and Huey, Dewey, and Louie, which he loved. He sometimes kept friends on the telephone for so long that they wondered how he could pay for the call. In all his conversations, Gadahn came across as soft-spoken, polite, highly literate, and passionate. He befriended college students who were years older than he was. "Adam was really intelligent and a really nice guy," said John E. Brown II, who was a student at the University of Wyoming when Gadahn first wrote to him. Chris Leffler, who had a band in Kentucky called Cataclysm, exchanged several letters with Gadahn and "never realized how young he was." Jeff Hayden, the guitarist of Timeghoul, a band from Missouri, remembered him as "a personable, comedic young man."

Gadahn first approached Spinoza Ray Prozak in 1993, after listening to his weekly radio show on KSPC 88.7, the student-run station at Pomona College. Prozak, who asked me to use only his metal name, was an English major, and was reading Nietzsche, William Burroughs, and H. P. Lovecraft. Gadahn would call in, and the two would chat between track changes. Lovecraft's gothic horror stories were a source of inspiration for many death-metal bands, and Gadahn seemed to have read all of them more than once. But, if the conversation veered into literary theory, Gadahn could follow that, too. Prozak thought, He's kind of a deep one.

Prozak remembered that Gadahn mocked death metal's obsession with the occult: "He said something about his parents having goats, and we always laughed about that because with any satanic imagery you always gotta have a goat." Gadahn was "a little socially inexperienced, a little withdrawn," Prozak said. "He was lonely, and I think he also had a sense of tragedy. He was one of those guys where most of his concerns were external. I mean, he knew he was going to survive being alone. He was concerned with where the world was going." Gadahn was particularly troubled by the urban sprawl surrounding Los Angeles and spreading across Southern California. "You have this city that keeps growing, it's beset by problems, it's kinda miserable to live there, but everybody adores it because of the money—there was a lot of that sort of stuff that he talked about," Prozak said. "He'd be just like 'You know, this is crazy. We live out here in this area that's the end of the universe. Most of the people around me are brain-dead, nobody cares about anything that's going on, we're wrecking everything that's good, all the trees are disappearing, everything is being turned into suburbs. I feel like I'm the only one who notices this.'"

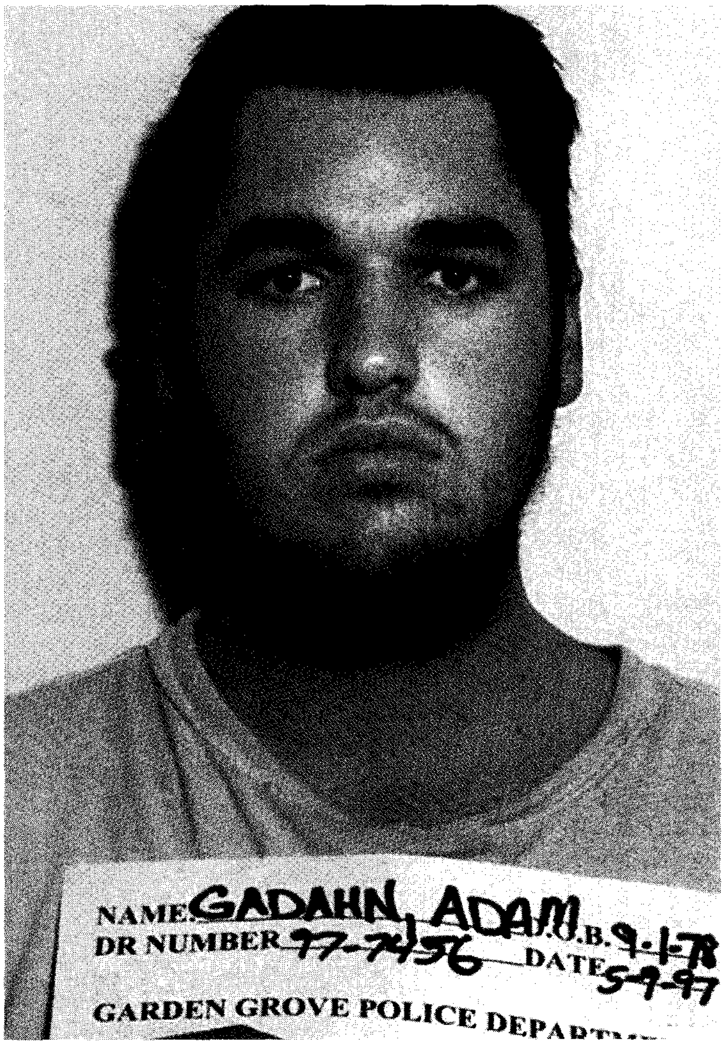
As Gadahn learned more about the death-metal community, he began to seek out musicians whom he revered, or people who he believed played important roles in the underground, and he became a conduit of death-metal news from such places as South America ("Peru, yeah, they've got a growing metal scene down there"), the Baltics ("a cool techno-death band from Lithuania"), and the Far East ("a godly power/thrash band outta Malaysia"). Gadahn also liked to play the role of promoter; he made flyers for Prozak's radio show and, proud of his artwork, sent them to other people. The flyers were essentially elaborate doodles. (His sketches of zombies and ghouls, more cute than horrific, found their way onto nearly everything he mailed.) One flyer features a hermaphrodite zombie surrounded by the words "I die in excruciating torment—my life fades out of existence—all of this worth nothing." In a picture he sent as a possible cover design to a zine called *Xenocide*, he drew four monsters encircling a frightened boy. The boy looks up at the beasts and stabs one with his sharpened tongue.

Gadahn listened to Peter Gabriel, the Allman Brothers, and even Haydn and Rimsky-Korsakov, and he often attended the symphony with an aunt, Nancy Pearlman, a journalist and environmental activist. But his focus remained death metal, for which he had developed a discerning ear. In a review for *Xenocide* of an album by a band called Autopsy, he wrote disapprovingly about "glitches in the engineering that you will notice if you listen through headphones," but he celebrated the band's "guttural growlings, repulsive throughout."

During the summer of 1993, Gadahn decided to try composing his own music, even though he didn't really know how to play an instrument. (He briefly took guitar lessons and claimed to have learned "pieces by Zeppelin, Mancini, Thorogood, and Ozzy.") He formed a one-man band called Aphasia; his first recording was an hour long. "The music can be described as an experimental symphonic ambient electronic industrial noise collage, depending upon the listener's point of view," Gadahn wrote to a friend. To make it, he used a Casio synthesizer, two-track tape recorders, a cymbal, and his voice. Gadahn advertised Aphasia to his pen pals as "melodic yet musically-removed," and he found humor in its rawness. He designed an Aphasia logo, and referred to himself as "Noise dork Aphasia." In the next two years, he released at least five Aphasia recordings, including "Non-Relativistic Quantum Mechanics" and "Delirium: 7 Hallucinatory Interludes, Op. 2."

John Brown, Gadahn's former friend in Wyoming, mailed me an Aphasia tape that he had saved. The cassette's packaging featured a knife-bearing angel, a photo from the Holocaust of a cadaver being pushed into a crematorium, and a reproduction of the Rylands

Papyrus, one of the oldest surviving fragments of the Gospels. ("Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.' The Judeans said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.'") I played the tape. The Casio's drum machine, set to a racing speed, is the foundation for a repetitive cycle of notes that in turn serve as a base for samples of death metal, classical music, and bleating goats. At one point, Gadahn can be heard speaking quickly, with the intonation of a radio talk-show host. Referring to one of death metal's pioneers, Chuck Schuldiner, who wrote a pro-choice, pro-death-penalty song, Gadahn says, "Not *for* it myself, kind of *against* it, in fact. But Chuck thinks it's a great idea. Well, Chuck, you want to kill people, go ahead and do it. Anyway, no, he's talking about institutionalized murder. I mean, like, stuff like the death penalty and abortion. I don't know, abortion seems to be a clear issue to me, so does the death penalty. Not really into the killing-people thing."



In 1997, Gadahn attacked an official of his local Islamic Society.

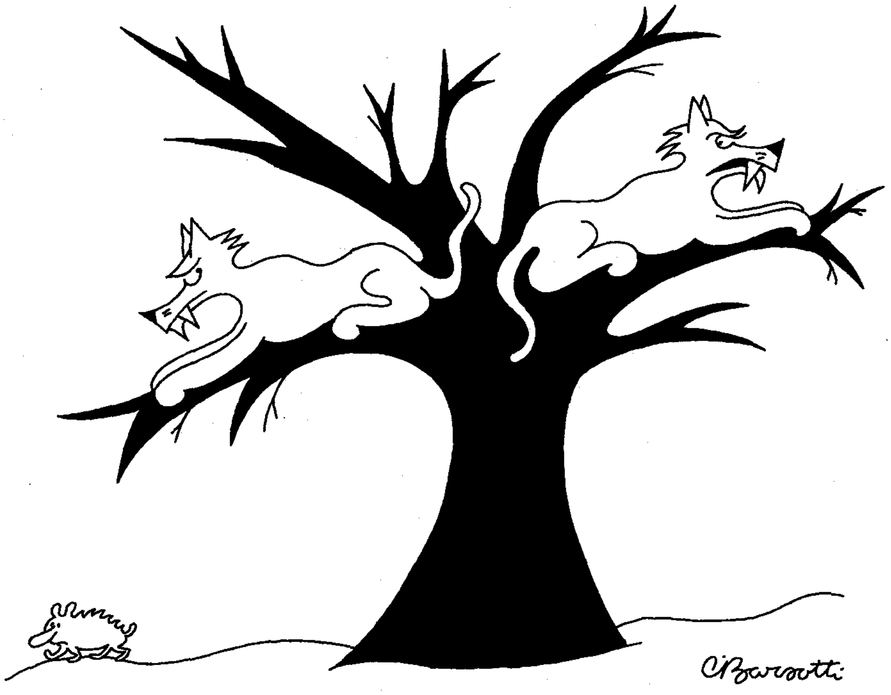
COURTESY GARDEN GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Gadahn rarely discussed life on the farm with his death-metal friends. Once, he mentioned to Brown that he didn't have access to running water. "It struck me that he wasn't telling the truth," Brown told me. "And I'm like 'What do you do when you need to go to the bathroom?' And he's like 'Go outside.' And I'm like 'Really, and do what?' And he's like 'Dig a hole.' And then he'd laugh." (The farm had a composting toilet.) The two sometimes chatted about books. Brown suggested that Gadahn read "Firefly," a horror novel by Piers Anthony about an alien predator that puts people into a sexual trance, sucks out their protoplasm, and kills them with bile. In his next letter to Brown, Gadahn said, "Man, that's twisted."

Several times a month, the Gadahn family drove to a public library in the nearby town of Hemet. A librarian there told me that the Gadahns spent a great deal of time browsing in the stacks, or reading. Like other parents, Jennifer and Phil worried about their children watching too much TV. (A relative had given them a battery-operated television.) Adam and his siblings often played outside, among the hundreds of goats that grazed the rolling acres surrounding the cabin. Michael Rowe, a neighbor, remembered seeing them, all four children with long hair. Phil Gadahn eventually gave up goat farming, but he kept some of his animals because their nibbling protected his home from brushfires. When nearby hills turned green with the rains, the farm became carpeted with white wildflowers—the only plant that the goats would not eat.

Sometimes Adam would visit his paternal grandparents, Carl and Agnes Pearlman, in Santa Ana, where he would swim with neighborhood children and family friends. Carl Pearlman was a respected urologist, a patron of the arts, and a board member of the Anti-Defamation League. Agnes was a college teacher. Gadahn also spent time with his aunt Nancy. The two would go on hikes or travel to other parts of the country or overseas. Occasionally, Adam helped Nancy host a radio show on the environment. He also appeared in "Econews," a series that she produces for cable networks. In one episode, Adam interviews an anthropologist who studies garbage. (One of his questions: "What about the garbage problem at the Grand Canyon?") Wearing a blue baseball cap and a white T-shirt, he seems to enjoy being in front of the camera.

In June, 1995, when Gadahn was sixteen, he left the farm to live with his grandparents in Santa Ana. He had completed his high-school coursework, and was uncertain what to do next. "I moved in with the intent of finding a job," he wrote in his essay about his conversion, but it was "easier said than done." Gadahn found work at a computer store and thought about going to college. At home, he explored the Internet. "My grandmother, a computer whiz, is hooked up to America Online and I have been scooting the information superhighway," he wrote. Gadahn liked to cook, and enjoyed watching cooking shows on TV. He continued to work on Aphasia. His music had become darker and more textured—it sounded like a primordial nebula of noise—but he no longer found it rewarding. By 1995, several record companies had signed death metal's most prominent bands in an attempt to replicate the commercial suc-



"My first husband never brought home anything smaller than a water buffalo."

• •

cess of Metallica, a group that combined various metal subgenres in a way that appealed to mainstream audiences. In the liner notes of an Aphasia tape he made just before he moved, Gadahn decried "commercial death & thrash metal, and the rest of you losers! Die and burn in Hell!!!" That July, he completed another full-length recording and called it "Aesthetic Myopia."

Gadahn wrote of a yawning emptiness, and he sought ways "to fill that void." He began scrolling through AOL's religion folders on the Internet and tuning to Christian programming on the radio. That summer, he attended several Christian lectures and events, including one led by Gregory Koukl, an evangelical talk-show host who argues against religious pluralism. But Gadahn found evangelical Christianity's "apocalyptic ramblings" to be "paranoid" and hollow. As he later recalled, "I began to look for something else to hold onto."

During Gadahn's spiritual wanderings on the Internet, he found "discussions on Islam to be the most intriguing," he wrote after he converted. Islam's absolute monotheism appealed to him. "God, not as an anthropomorphic being but as an entity beyond human comprehension, transcendent of man, independent and undivided," he said. The Koran was "comprehensible to a layman, and there is no papacy or priesthood that is considered infallible in matters of interpretation: all Muslims are free to reflect and interpret the book given a sufficient education."

Sometime in the fall of 1995, Gadahn found his way to the Islamic Society of Orange County, in Garden Grove. During his first visits to the society's mosque, he was dressed casually. His hair was still long, and he was clean-shaven. One of the mosque's employees spoke with him briefly about the faith, and recommended some literature. Gadahn obtained an English translation of the Koran, and, while living at his grandparents' house, he worked his way through its hundred and fourteen suras, or chapters. He thought of his reading as "personal research," and when he spoke with his death-metal friends he did not mention it.

One evening in early November, Gadahn discovered a Web site that Jon Konrath, the editor of *Xenocide*, had created. Gadahn sent Konrath a short email that began, "Ha Ha Ha! I found you!" The two had not been in touch, and Gadahn assumed that Konrath wouldn't remember him. He wrote, "I am now, as ever, a revolting geek of mass proportions." Two hours later, Konrath responded, "Hey man. I am here, and of course I remember the stuff you did." Konrath told Gadahn that he had moved to Seattle and had become less interested in death metal. ("I slowly faded from the scene as the scene itself fragmented and lost some of its momentum.") Gadahn responded with an evasive note: "Tell me how you like Seattle—I'm thinking of moving there. Sorry about the shortness of this letter—longer one next time!"

Gadahn didn't write again. A week later, on November 17th, he returned to the Islamic Society and told the imam, Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, that he was ready to convert. To accept Islam, one must declare the shahada, an Arabic term that means "bearing witness." It is a single sentence: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his messenger." Sitting beneath fluorescent lights in Siddiqi's small office, Gadahn had trouble saying the words in Arabic, a mosque official who was there told me, so Siddiqi helped him. (When Gadahn filled out a declaration of faith—a one-page form provided by the mosque—he wrote that his father's name was Sef'udin, an Islamic name meaning "Sword of Faith.") New Muslims are not obliged to announce themselves publicly, but Gadahn told Siddiqi that he wanted to do so. It was a Friday, the busiest day for prayers, and that afternoon he stood before the Islamic Society's congregation to proclaim his conversion. The room did not face Mecca, so the worshippers had lined up in diagonal rows. Gadahn felt uplifted. A week later, he wrote, "It feels great to be a Muslim."

The Islamic Society of Orange County sits at the end of a quiet residential street. It was established in 1976, and for years it housed the only mosque in the area. By the early nineties, competing factions had formed at the society. In 1992, Saddiqi told a local paper that, in Islam, "we do not have a liberal mosque, a conservative mosque. We do not do that. It's not easy to keep everyone together." That year, during a challenge to his leadership, twenty supporters broke into the mosque at 2 A.M., changed the locks, and declared by fiat that Siddiqi would remain imam. One congregant told the paper that the dispute "split brother against brother, family member against family member."

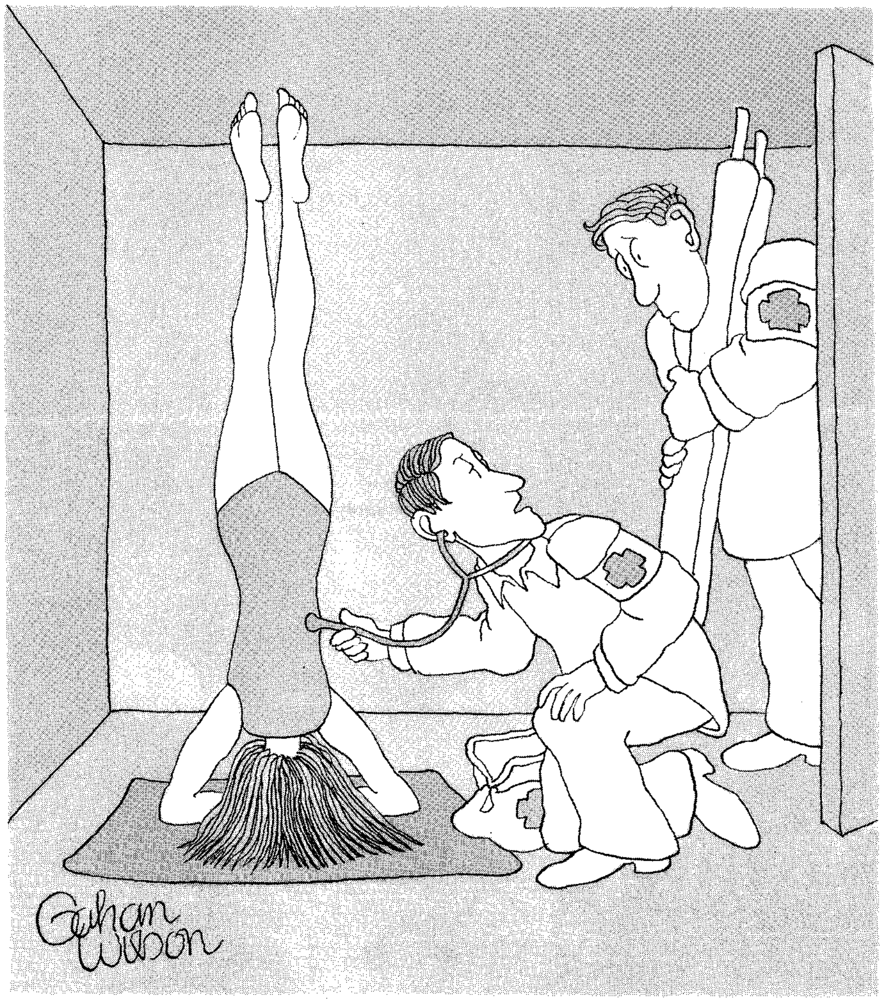
During the nineties, Muslims at the congregation and elsewhere in the United States watched with deep concern as wars broke out in Bosnia and in Chechnya; in both places, Muslims were widely considered to be the victims. In three civil wars—in Algeria, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan—Islamist parties fought in brutal struggles for power, and in the Middle East the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis continued. Islam's ummah—the community of believers—appeared to be under threat from many directions.

Supporting other Muslims in these conflicts was considered an honorable endeavor, and some people at the mosque spoke openly about doing so. A number of men who attended the mosque invoked the term jihad. When I asked Siddiqi to define "jihad" in its political sense, he said that it means "a struggle for peace and justice, so that you establish peace in the world, you establish justice in the world, and defend your own rights—the right of life, the right of property, the right of dignity and honor and freedom, and the right of your religion. So you defend yourself for that, and you defend other people who are suffering and oppressed. So jihad may take a military action, but it is not always a military action."

In December, 1992, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, a prominent Egyptian cleric and Islamic radical also known as the Blind Sheikh, visited the Islamic Society to lecture about jihad, and Siddiqi sat beside him to translate. Abdel Rahman dismissed nonviolent definitions of jihad as weak. He stressed that a number of unspecified enemies had "united themselves against Muslims" and that fighting them was obligatory. "If you are not going to the jihad, then you are neglecting the rules of Allah," he said. The opportunities for jihad were virtually everywhere, ranging from apostate Middle Eastern regimes to "those who are taking the wealth of Muslims from petrol or from oil." As he spoke, a red toolbox, with a slit cut into its lid for donations, was passed around the room. Videotapes of the lecture were later offered for sale at the society's bookstore.

Several months afterward, Abdel Rahman was indicted for helping to plot the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. One of his fatwas, issued from prison in 1998, became central to Al Qaeda's justification of mass violence. (When I asked J. Stephen Tidwell, the assistant director of the F.B.I.'s Los Angeles division, about Siddiqi's association with Abdel Rahman, he said, "We have a very strong relationship with Dr. Siddiqi. You do have to put it into the context of back then." Siddiqi told me that Abdel Rahman "was touring, and some people insisted that he should be there." Three days after September 11th, at the invitation of the White House, Siddiqi led a prayer at the National Cathedral, and later, in the Oval Office, he handed President George W. Bush a Koran and told him that Al Qaeda had nothing to do with what was in that book.)

In 1995, an act of terrorism hundreds of miles from California affected the Islamic Society's political atmosphere in an unexpected way. In April, Timothy McVeigh packed a truck with explosives and blew up part of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in Oklahoma City. McVeigh was charged two days after the bombing, but in that time a theory spread through the media that Muslim extremists were responsible. Angry calls flooded the phone lines at the Islamic Society's offices. "They threatened to kill our students, blow up our school, rape our women," Haitham Bundakji, who was then the society's president, told me. Bundakji set up an interfaith initiative to ease tensions and invited the police to advise the society



"Well, at least we know she died peacefully."

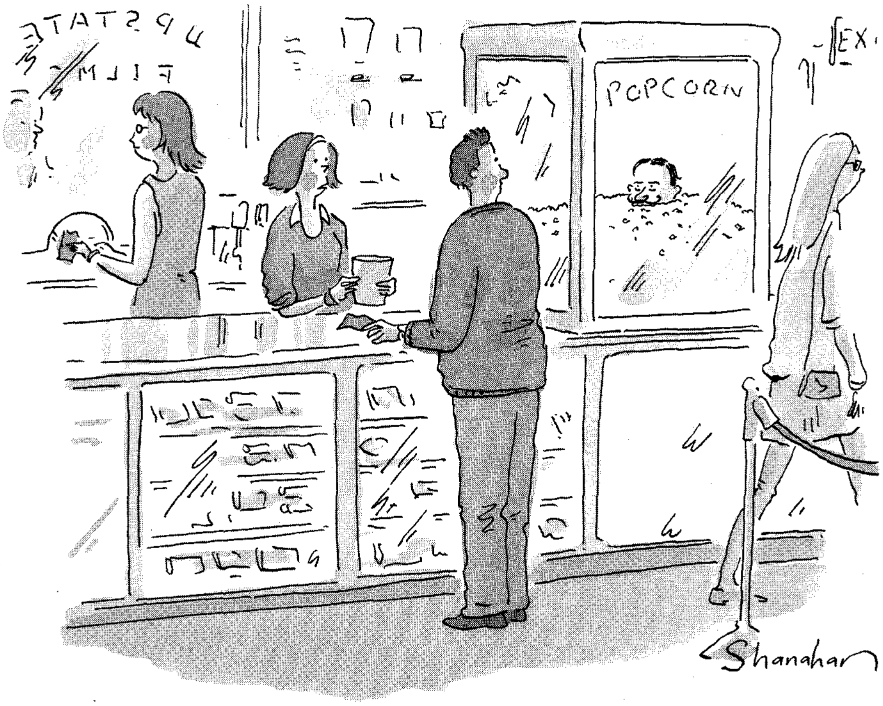
about security. He had a guardhouse installed on the society's grounds, and he hired guards to sit in it.

A week after his conversion ceremony, Gadahn wrote "Becoming Muslim," about his path to Islam, and posted it on the Internet. The essay reflected his new community's sense of embattlement. Gadahn criticized Americans who unfairly raised fears about the "Islamic Threat." Muslims, he wrote, "were not the bloodthirsty, barbaric terrorists that the news media and the televangelists paint them to be."

Gadahn wrote about himself as well. "My first seventeen years have been a bit different than the youth experienced by most Americans," he said. He discussed his upbringing on the farm, and gave the impression that his father was virtually a Muslim. ("My father is a *halal* butcher," he wrote, and emphasized that Phil "once had a number of Muslim friends.") Gadahn described his move to Santa Ana, his exposure to Islam on the Internet, and his reasons for converting. He deplored his passion for music. "I had become obsessed with demonic Heavy Metal music, something the rest of my family (as I now realize, rightfully so) was not happy with," he wrote. "My entire life was focused on expanding my music collection. I eschewed personal cleanliness and let my room reach an unbelievable state of disarray. My relationship with my parents became strained, although only intermittently so. I am sorry even as I write this."

Gadahn said that he would now be "reflecting on the greatness of Allah," and learning how to perform daily supplications called salat. He prayed at the mosque five times a day. Siddiqi remembered him to be "very quiet, always by himself." But Gadahn quickly joined a group of men who held an evening discussion group in the prayer hall. The men analyzed passages of the Koran and spoke about the wars in Bosnia and Chechnya. Gadahn stopped shaving and cut his hair. He began to wear sandals and dressed in long, Saudi-style robes or in Afghan shalwar kameez.

The discussion group was Gadahn's first real social environment outside his family, and it was composed of men like him, who yearned for authenticity in their faith. They spoke often about what was and was not *haram*, or forbidden, in Islam. "Everything was *haram* to them in the United States," Zena Zeitoun, a black convert who knew some of the men, told me. "If they saw a girl walking down the street in a short skirt, that's *haram*. If they saw you with a beer bottle in your hand, that's *haram*. If they saw a man and a woman holding each other, that's *haram*. Everything was *haram* to them."



"Plain, buttered, or Ramon?"

Gadahn began to take the group's prohibitions seriously. "I get this big box in the mail, and it's all of his CDs, and I had no idea why he sent them," John Brown told me. More boxes followed, also without explanation. In total, Brown estimated, Gadahn sent him well over a hundred recordings. There was also a videotape of a movie, "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes."

Not long after the boxes arrived, Gadahn called Brown. He sounded happy, Brown recalled, but it was clear that he had changed. In the past, Gadahn had been playful and ironic. In his letters, he often gave Brown silly fictitious middle names, like Epistaxis—a medical term referring to nosebleeds. Now he was direct:

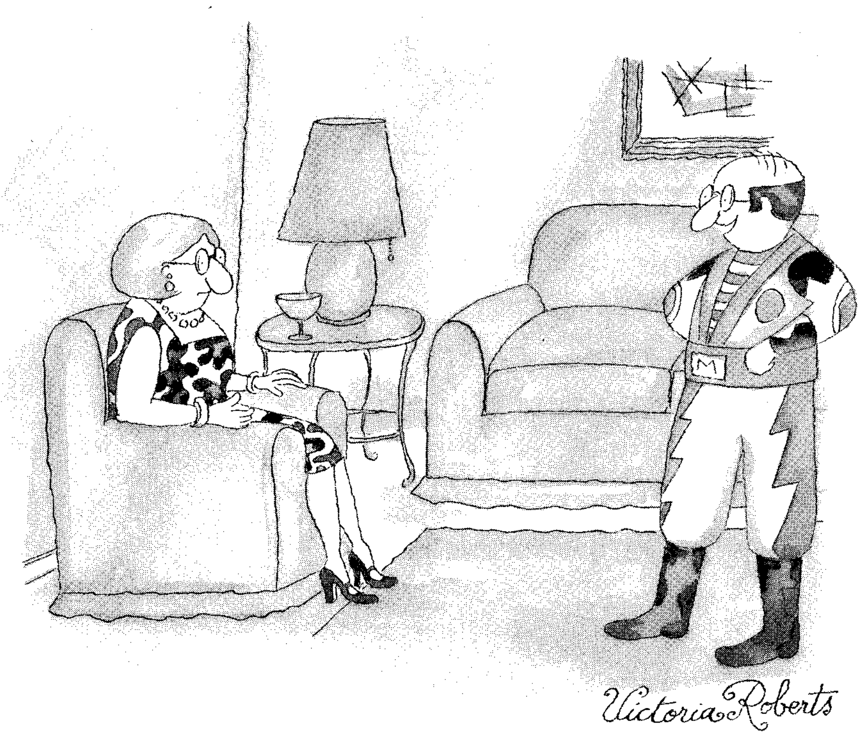
"Did you get the boxes?"

"Yeah. What's up with that?"

"Well, I turned Muslim."

At the time, Brown was working in a small music shop in Cheyenne owned by his parents, and Gadahn thought that they might be able to sell his collection. Brown told him, "Well, we do guitars and stuff, not CDs, but that's O.K., you know." Gadahn admitted that, despite his conversion, he had not been able to give up all his recordings. (A CD by Brown's band was among the ones he kept.) The two chatted about music for several minutes longer. Brown never heard from Gadahn again.

By the fall of 1996, Gadahn was living with five or six other Muslims in a small apartment a block from the mosque. Zena Zeitoun visited the apartment frequently with her husband, who is Syrian. "It looked like a dungeon," she said. Most of the men living with Gadahn were from the Middle East. At night, they slept in two cramped bedrooms, on single beds or on mats. The men sat on newspapers scattered on the floor to eat their meals. There was a ratty sofa, and an old TV, which they never used. The only decorations on the walls were Islamic sayings of the Prophet, and a timetable for salat. The windows were covered with sheets and tablecloths. "For every prayer, those men walked to the mosque, and then they came back



"I can't seem to live in the present, you don't want me to live in the past, so I'm opting for the future as I see it."

home," Zeitoun recalled. They did little else.

Zeitoun remembered Gadahn as "a gentleman" and the only convert in the group. It was hard to get to know him because of the uncompromising religious atmosphere among the men. "They didn't talk to a woman," she said. "As a Muslim woman, you have to look down. If you look up, then you're like a whore." When in their company, she said, her husband became harshly critical of her American habits. "I didn't like going there," she recalled. "It felt creepy." Zeitoun told me that there were often guests at the apartment, men who would spend a few days there and then leave. "My husband used to say that they're passing through."

Gadahn needed money, and not long after he converted he asked Haitham Bundakji if he could work at the Islamic Society. Bundakji had been a witness at Gadahn's shahada. A stocky man with a goatee and a quick smile, he talks about "building bridges" with other religious groups. He works closely with the local police department, where he is a chaplain, and believes that Muslim Americans should participate more actively in electoral politics. He is a Sunni, born in Jordan, but his wife is Shiite, so he likes to tell people that he is "Sushi." When he was young, he dabbled in Sufism, but he now holds more conservative religious beliefs. He loves music, but it is a guilty pleasure.

"Adam asked me for a job, and I gave him one as a security guard," Bundakji told me. Gadahn began working the night shift in the mosque's guardhouse, often arriving after his evening discussion group disbanded. The men in the group, Bundakji said, were becoming increasingly hostile to the mosque's leadership and were especially upset about his interfaith efforts. Bundakji's nickname among non-Muslims is Danny, and sometimes, he told me, the men in the group called him "Danny the Jew." Gadahn's relationship with Bundakji grew hostile, too. One night, Bundakji caught him asleep while on duty. "I had a few words with him," Bundakji recalled. "I said, 'How could you sleep on the job? Don't you understand that it's just like stealing? You expect me to pay you money, but you haven't earned it.'" Gadahn was angry, Bundakji told me, but he didn't say anything. Bundakji fired him.

Bundakji also barred the discussion group from gathering at the mosque. But Gadahn only drew closer to the men. "He was kind of a naïve guy," Rafat Qahoush, a nurse who then prayed at the Islamic Society, recalled. "He looked like he didn't have experience in life. He is kind of a follower. You dictate for him what to do." Gadahn sought guidance from two men in particular: an Egyptian named Hisham Diab and a Palestinian named Khalil Deek. Both were active in the discussion group, and were known to be militant in their political and religious beliefs. Diab had fought in Bosnia, and Deek's extremist connections were "well established in the classified intelligence," a former senior C.I.A. officer told me. According to Qahoush, Deek would often leave the country for months at a time.

In the late nineties, the National Security Council, concerned about possible terrorist attacks around the millennium, asked a team of private terrorism analysts to investigate Deek and Diab's activities. Rita Katz, who is now the director of the SITE Institute, a nonprofit group that monitors jihadi communiqués on the Internet, led the investigation. (Katz showed me a videotape of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman's 1992 lecture at the Islamic Society.) Katz knew that Deek had obtained American citizenship, and she learned from intelligence reports that he had connections to a terrorist cell based in Montreal. (The cell included Ahmed Ressam, who was involved in the millennium plot to blow up Los Angeles International Airport.) Katz suspected that Deek was working as a coördinator for Al Qaeda groups in the West. She discovered that he had collaborated with Diab in California; the two men had set up a bogus nonprofit group, called Charity Without Borders, in Diab's name, and Diab had even managed to obtain grants for it from the state. (Gadahn is listed as "crew member" in the charity's official documents.) Deek and Diab paid the rent on the apartment where Gadahn lived, according to Diab's ex-wife, and purchased a beat-up Audi for the men to share. Gadahn did not have a license, but he often drove the car on errands.

Diab's ex-wife is Saraah Olson, and,

"How small will he get?"

though her memory is colored by her divorce, she and her son, Ryan, offer the most detailed picture of Gadahn's radicalization. Olson had met Diab in 1991, while she was working as a secretary at California State University at Dominguez Hills. He had come by her office to pick up some forms, and, a few minutes later, he returned to ask her out. They began dating, and after about a year they married. Ryan, Olson's son from a previous marriage, was nearly six, and, encouraged by Diab, the two converted to Islam. Ryan adopted the name Bilal and began attending a local Muslim school; Saraah began wearing a hijab and got a job at the Islamic Society. But soon, Olson told me, Diab was attempting to control every aspect of their lives, often through physical abuse. Diab hung blankets over the windows. He prevented Ryan from playing outside, and forced him to study a book of Arabic prayers.

"Hisham was just a hair trigger away from killing someone," Ryan, who is now a twenty-year-old college student, told me. "I had made it halfway through the book, with no problems. But I mispronounced a couple of words, and Hisham was like 'Do it again.' I was like 'O.K.,' and I mispronounced them again. And that just set him off, and he came down right on my back with those hands. And I remember a rush of air out of my lungs, and I fell to the floor. I went upstairs—my mom was in the bedroom—and Hisham was just going insane, just spitting vitriol out of his mouth. My mom closed and locked the door. It was like the bullfights in Spain—like one of those bulls charged right through the door, and it collapsed right in front of him. And he just came right through and grabbed my mom, and I don't remember what happened next except that he dragged her out onto the balcony." Later, Ryan said, "I hated being Bilal."

Hisham Diab noticed Adam Gadahn at the Islamic Society and began inviting him to his home. Sometimes, Khalil Deek would be there, too. "Adam would come and eat lunch with Hisham and Khalil, or they would take him out to lunch," Olson told me. "They treated him like he was their new pet." She said that the two men referred to Gadahn as their "little rabbit" because "he would run around and do their little things for them all the time, like he would run over to the bank and make the deposit, or he would go over to the post-office box and get the mail." When the two men told Gadahn to stop wearing jeans, he stopped wearing jeans. They gave him daily religious instruction, Olson said, which often involved memorizing the Koran, and required him to learn at least three prayers in Arabic every week.

"Adam turned very, very quickly," Olson told me. "He absorbed it all. At first, he would come into the house, and if I would be making tea he would say, 'Thank you, sister,' very loudly into the kitchen. But he never, ever said anything again to me after Hisham told him, 'You never thank them. That's their duty.' " Deek and Diab often talked about politics. "They would be every day in our living room—Khalil and Hisham—saying, 'You have to kill the *kufar*, the nonbeliever. You can't associate with them,'" she said. According to Olson, America was a bastion of sin to Deek and Diab, and they liked to say that its "streets will run red with blood." At the mosque, they regarded Haitham Bundakji with animosity, Olson told me. "Hisham and Khalil hated Danny. They'd say, 'He's a weak Muslim, he's friends with Jews, he goes to Baptist churches, he hangs out with the police department—he's just an awful Muslim.' They truly hated him. Just the mention of his name could put Hisham over the boiling point." (Intelligence officials believe that Deek is dead; Diab's whereabouts are unknown.)

On May 9, 1997, Gadahn attended midday prayers at the Islamic Society, as he always did. Before leaving his apartment, he put on sandals, a T-shirt, and tan slacks and slipped a traditional white robe over his clothes. Every Friday, the congregation held a swap meet after prayers to raise money for the society. Gadahn brought a number of hats and perfumes that he hoped to sell for his own profit. Just before the service, he dumped his items in front of the mosque's entrance and wandered away.

As the call to prayer began, Haitham Bundakji noticed Gadahn's scattered belongings. He had already asked Gadahn not to sell his wares on the Islamic Society's grounds. Bundakji collected the hats and perfumes, put them in his office, and went into the mosque to pray. When he returned, Gadahn was waiting in his office. Bundakji could tell that he was enraged.

"Where is Siddiqi?" Gadahn demanded.

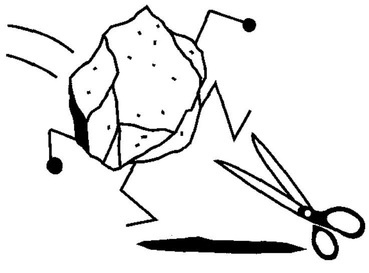
"You should show proper respect to the leaders of the society," Bundakji replied. He corrected Gadahn: "That's Doctor Siddiqi."

Gadahn punched Bundakji in the face, just above one eye, and, as the two scuffled, several men standing in a nearby hallway rushed to pull Gadahn away. Within minutes, a police officer named Bill Allison had arrived and arrested Gadahn. Once Gadahn had been cuffed and taken to the station, his anger subsided. "He was respectful to me," Allison recalled. "But obviously he had strong opinions toward the society." Gadahn was fingerprinted and booked, and, in June, at his court hearing, he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor assault and battery. He was sentenced to two days in jail and forty hours of community service. Court documents show that he received credit for the jail time but that he ignored the community service. Another warrant was issued for his arrest. It is still active; the bond is for seventy-five hundred dollars.

Several months after his arrest, Gadahn made his first trip to Pakistan. He told his family that he would be travelling with friends. According to Olson, Deek and Diab paid for the trip with money from their nonprofit group, Charity Without Borders. (Gadahn told family members that he paid for the trip with his savings.) Gadahn returned to California the following spring, suffering from a waterborne illness. He was sixty pounds lighter, but his beard had filled out, and he was sunburned. Carl Pearlman, Gadahn's grandfather, supervised his medical care. A few months later, however, Pearlman died, and after his funeral Gadahn returned to Pakistan. Occasionally, he wrote or called home, but for the most part, as Phil Gadahn later recalled, "He just faded."

Much of what is known about Gadahn's activities in Pakistan comes from intelligence reports that are difficult to verify. He told his parents that he was working in the country as a journalist—a euphemism, it seems, for his early propaganda and translation work for Al Qaeda. For a time, he was in Karachi. He was also in Peshawar, a way station for mujahideen seeking to cross into Afghanistan. Deek, who had moved to the city as well, was close with one of bin Laden's top operatives there, Abu Zubaydah, a Palestinian. In Peshawar, Deek shared a bank account with Zubaydah and worked on a CD-ROM version of the "Encyclopedia of Jihad," a compilation of military manuals that spanned nearly a dozen volumes. American intelligence officials had been investigating Deek and Zubaydah's activities since at least the late eighties, but Gadahn was still only a peripheral figure; a C.I.A. case officer based in Peshawar at the time told me that Gadahn "didn't come up on my net at all."

Zubaydah's primary responsibility was to arrange transportation for people from Pakistan to Al Qaeda camps just inside Afghanistan. He maintained guest houses in two neighborhoods in Peshawar, Hayatabad and University Town, and recruits would be shuttled from the houses, over the Khyber Pass, to a military and religious training facility called Khaldan. Graduates of Khaldan then advanced to more specialized camps. Thousands of men passed through this network, and keeping track of security and logistics was a complex task involving a team of people. Zubaydah, who had a closely cropped beard and wore large glasses, was a commanding manager, but he also exhibited odd behavior. Omar Nasiri, a former spy for European intelligence agencies who met Zubaydah in the nineties on his way to Khaldan, told me that Zubaydah shuffled around his home in near-total darkness, carrying a gas lantern from room to room. He barely spoke and would often communicate by pointing.

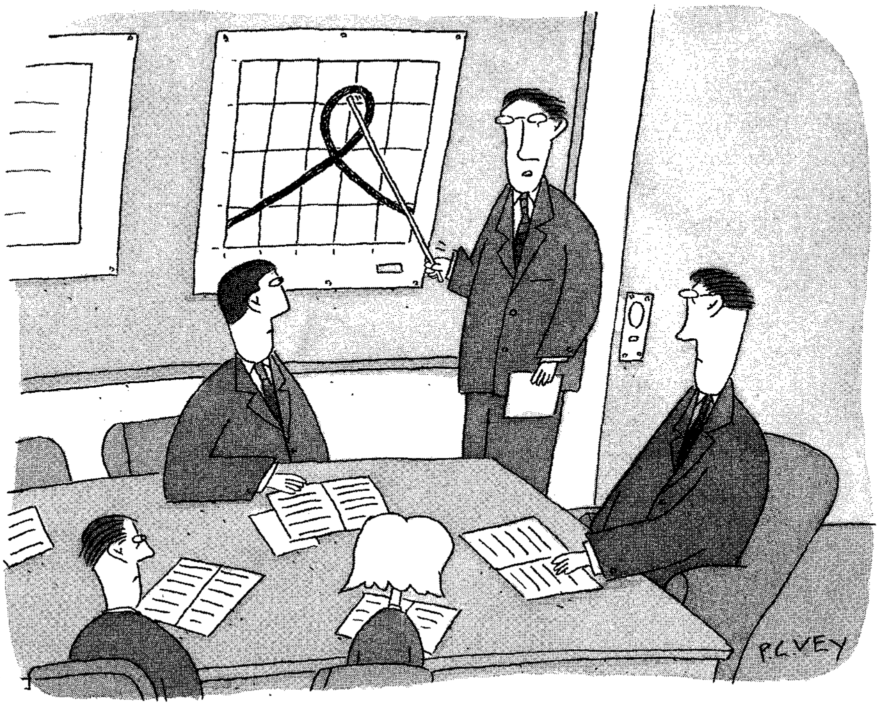


According to the F.B.I., Gadahn was among the recruits who "associated" with Zubaydah. An American intelligence official told me that Gadahn eventually made his way through Zubaydah's network to a camp in Afghanistan called Al Faruq, where he "served as a translator for members of the majlis al-shura"—bin Laden's governing council. "He was translating Al Qaeda military manuals from Arabic to English so they could be circulated," the official said. At the time, English was commonly used by jihadi groups that were from non-Arab countries, and manuals in English were thought to be especially useful for jihadis who were working in Pakistan and Southeast Asia. "Gadahn wasn't the only one, but he was apparently the head of that particular idea," the intelligence official said. "He wasn't a made man, but he was meeting people who were." As Gadahn gained the trust of senior members of Al Qaeda, he began to hear talk of a "major attack" against the United States; but, he later recalled in a video, he thought that it would take place "in the Islamic region, like the Arabian Peninsula," rather than on American soil.

Hamid Mir, a Pakistani journalist, told me that in November, 2001, he saw Gadahn at an Al Qaeda safe house in Kabul, where he appeared to be working as a low-level functionary. "He was wearing the local shalwar kameez and a commando jacket," Mir said. "Some of the boys who were there said he was a very good cook." About thirty men were living in the house. Gadahn prepared meals and hot water for the washroom and performed some administrative duties. As he went about his chores, Mir recalled, Gadahn would try to crack jokes in broken Pashto. "Somebody laughed," he told me. "But many people didn't understand what he was saying, including myself." Three months later, Gadahn called his parents for the last time. His mother later told the F.B.I. that Gadahn spoke with an accent, and, when she had asked him about it, he said that he hadn't spoken English in eight months.

The C.I.A. was not aware of the extent of Gadahn's involvement with Al Qaeda until after September 11th. When analysts at Langley later searched their databases for information about his overseas activities, his name surfaced "several times before 9/11, but only in lists of names that somebody passed to us," the former senior C.I.A. officer told me. Abu Zubaydah was apprehended in 2002 and the chief planner of the terrorist attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, in 2003, and both spoke about Gadahn during their interrogations, an intelligence official said. Mohammed said that he had last seen Gadahn in Karachi and that he had asked him to join a plot to blow up gas stations in Maryland, but Gadahn declined, explaining that he had recently married and his wife was pregnant. (In his last call home, Gadahn told his parents that he had married an Afghan refugee.) However, the official added, Gadahn participated in a number of "face-to-face brainstorming sessions" with Mohammed.

Gadahn was encouraged to apply his promotional skills in his work for Al Qaeda. He narrated his first piece of propaganda, an audio translation of a statement by bin Laden, in 2002. By the spring of 2004, Gadahn was officially a wanted man. The F.B.I. announced that it had issued a BOLO—Be On the Lookout—for him, and presumably Gadahn knew he was being sought. (In one video, he mentioned that he listened to the BBC from his mountain hideouts.) That October, he released his first video as Azzam al-Amriki. He wore a checkered scarf over his head and across his face, his eyes were shielded by sunglasses, and a rifle was propped against his shoulder. A voice off camera asked him, "You are an American. You have joined a movement waging war on America, and killing large numbers of Americans. Don't you in any way feel that you are betraying your people and country?"

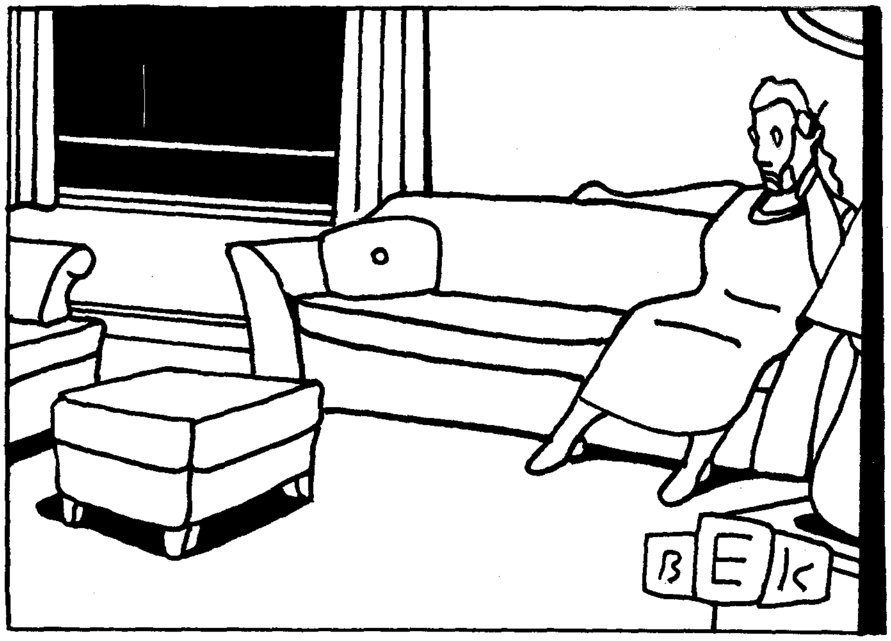


"And, of course, this is when all our loose change fell out of our pockets."

Gadahn leaned forward when he spoke, and at times he gesticulated wildly. "First of all," he replied, "the allegiance and loyalty of a Muslim is to Allah, his messenger, his religion, and his fellow-believers, before anyone and anything else. So if there is a conflict between his religion and his nation and family, then he must choose the religion every time. In fact, to side with the unbelievers against Islam and Muslims is one of the acts that nullify one's Islamic faith." Gadahn noted that even Muhammad had fought his own cousins, and said, "So some of the early Muslims fought and killed their closest relatives during battle." He then launched into a scathing description of American foreign policy. Jabbing his finger at the camera, Gadahn denounced the citizens of the United States: "No, my former countrymen, you are guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty!" He concluded with a warning: "The streets of America shall run red with blood."

Adam Gadahn's journey to Al Qaeda may seem idiosyncratic, marked by adolescent loneliness and confusion and religious seeking gone wrong, but it appears to adhere with remarkable precision to a model developed by a forensic psychiatrist and former C.I.A. case officer named Marc Sageman. After September 11th, while teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, Sageman decided to examine the process of Islamic radicalization in a way that had not been done before: empirically. In his clinical research, he had studied murder, genocide, and ethnic conflict. He had worked for the C.I.A. in Pakistan during the nineteen-eighties, in the effort to push the Soviets from Afghanistan.

As the United States prepared to invade Afghanistan, in 2001, Sageman watched with dismay the portrayal of the Islamist movement by the media and within government circles. Few people were talking about jihadists as human beings, which meant that they weren't trying to understand what motivated them. "I come from medicine, and it's evidence-based," Sageman told me. He decided to gather data about Al Qaeda's members, in order to discern what they had in common. Using trial



"But I hate su casa."

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transcripts and news reports, he assembled biographies of a hundred and seventy-two militants. "By analyzing people individually, I didn't get very far," he said. "In groups, they seemed to have similar patterns."

Sageman discovered that most Al Qaeda operatives had been radicalized in the West and were from caring, intact families that had solidly middle- or upper-class economic backgrounds. Their families were religious but generally mainstream. The vast majority of the men did not have criminal records or any history of mental disorders. Moreover, there was little evidence of coördinated recruitment, coercion, or brainwashing. Al Qaeda's leaders waited for aspiring jihadists to come to them—and then accepted only a small percentage. Joining the jihad, Sageman realized, was like trying to get into a highly selective college: many apply, but only a few are accepted.

Perhaps his most unexpected conclusion was that ideology and political grievances played a minimal role during the initial stages of enlistment. "The only significant finding was that the future terrorists felt isolated, lonely, and emotionally alienated," Sageman told the September 11th Commission in 2003, during a debriefing about his research. These lost men would congregate at mosques and find others like them. Eventually, they would move into apartments near their mosques and build friendships around their faith and its obligations. He has called his model the "*halal* theory of terrorism"—since bonds were often formed while sharing *halal* meals—or the "bunch of guys" theory. The bunch of guys constituted a closed society that provided a sense of meaning that did not exist in the larger world.

Sageman examined scholarship on other revivalist movements and found important parallels. He learned that doctrine played a negligible role for new converts to the Reverend Moon's Unification Church, for example. "Many moved into the Moonie commune because of their attachment to group members while still openly expressing rejection of the Moon ideology," Sageman wrote in his book, "Understanding Terror Networks," which was published in 2004. But, once the converts experienced the social benefits of their new community, accepting their friends' beliefs was much easier. Later, when asked by researchers about their conversion, most Moonies spoke of the irresistible appeal of the church's religious outlook, and had forgotten their initial skepticism about the faith.

Within the "bunch of guys," Sageman found, men often became radicalized through a process akin to one-upmanship, in which members try to outdo one another in demonstrations of religious zeal. (Gregory Saathoff, a research psychiatrist at the University of Virginia and a consultant to the F.B.I., told me, "We're seeing in some of the casework that once they get the fever they are white-hot to move forward.") Generally, the distinction between converts and men with mainstream Islamic backgrounds is less meaningful than it might seem, Sageman said, since "they all become born again." Many Muslims who accept radical Salafist beliefs consider themselves "reverts." They typically renounce their former lives and friends—and often their families.

Sageman's model provides clues to how radicalization unfolds, but it cannot explain why one person embraces extremism and another does not. (As a former senior intelligence analyst told me, "It's not something you can plot on a graph and study.") Two of Gadahn's siblings are in college, and the third is an aesthetician; why was Adam the one to join Al Qaeda? After Gadahn's indictment for treason, his father told a reporter, "Adam has gone against everything our family believes in." Indeed, some of Gadahn's most pointed rhetoric as an Al Qaeda operative appears to be directed toward those who were closest to him. "The way to paradise is not a multi-lane highway," Gadahn declares in "An Invitation to Islam," and one can't help but think that he has in mind his father's pliant spirituality. Gadahn admonishes those who embraced, "without hesitation, every obscure and foreign religion, philosophy, and ideology," or who searched for happiness in a "cultist-style withdrawal from the world." In the video's final moments, Gadahn turns to the subject of family, and his message is chilling. "Allah warns the parents, siblings, offspring, and other relatives of the Muslim that their relation to him will be of no use to them on the day of judgment, if they have not themselves died as true believers," he says. "So don't be complacent, or let the Devil deceive you into thinking that your connections will intercede for you on that terrible day." ♦

LETTER FROM MAURITIUS

DIGGING FOR DODOS

Hunting an extinct bird.

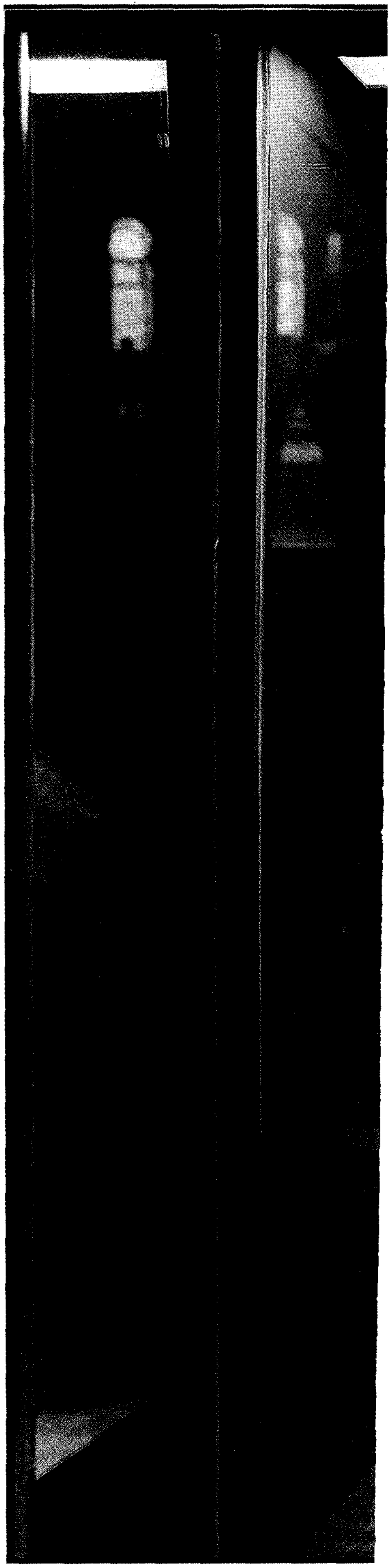
BY IAN PARKER

Julian Hume, a British paleontologist, is one of the world's leading authorities on the dodo, the large, flightless bird that lived on the island of Mauritius—five hundred miles east of Madagascar, in the Indian Ocean—until its extinction, at the end of the seventeenth century. I met Hume a few months ago in the southeast corner of the island, at the muddy work site of an international group of scientists looking for dodo remains; such an activity had not been seen on this scale for nearly a century. The group called itself the 2006 Mauritius Dodo Expedition. Hume, who is an easygoing man in his mid-forties, was unshaven, and as filthy as a child in a detergent commercial. He walked me around the area of the expedition's interest: a field on the edge of a sugar estate, where an orange ditchdigger on caterpillar tracks stood silent, holding in its scoop a block of dripping, peaty-looking earth that it had extracted a short time earlier. The neat hole left by the scoop had filled with water, and a dragonfly traced the outline of this new pond in an unflagging rectangular circuit. The digger's driver had fallen asleep in his cab while awaiting instructions. A jet took off from the international airport nearby. To one side, Hume's colleagues grubbed through a previous scoop of mud, using water pumped by a generator. When the generator stopped for a moment, we could hear surf; the sea was only a few hundred yards away. In the other direction, a wooded slope led up to sugarcane fields, which, out of view, stretched on a flat plain for miles inland toward distant mountains.

Hume, who grew up in a working-class family on the south coast of England, was a "bird and extinction freak" as a child, but he didn't start his formal scientific studies until he was in his thirties, and he finished his Ph.D. only in 2005. (A year later, he became a grandfather.) Today, Hume holds positions at the Natural History Museum in London and at the University of Portsmouth, but he is also a serious amateur artist, and in his spare time he makes careful, although inevitably approximate, paintings of dodos and other extinct bird species, working with acrylic paint on paper. Three of these have been published in the journal *Nature*. This dual approach to the subject might not seem fully respectable to some paleontological colleagues, but Hume argues that a study of extinct animals calls for an imaginative and extrapolatory frame of mind, of a kind not always valued in research science: a readiness to see what is not there.

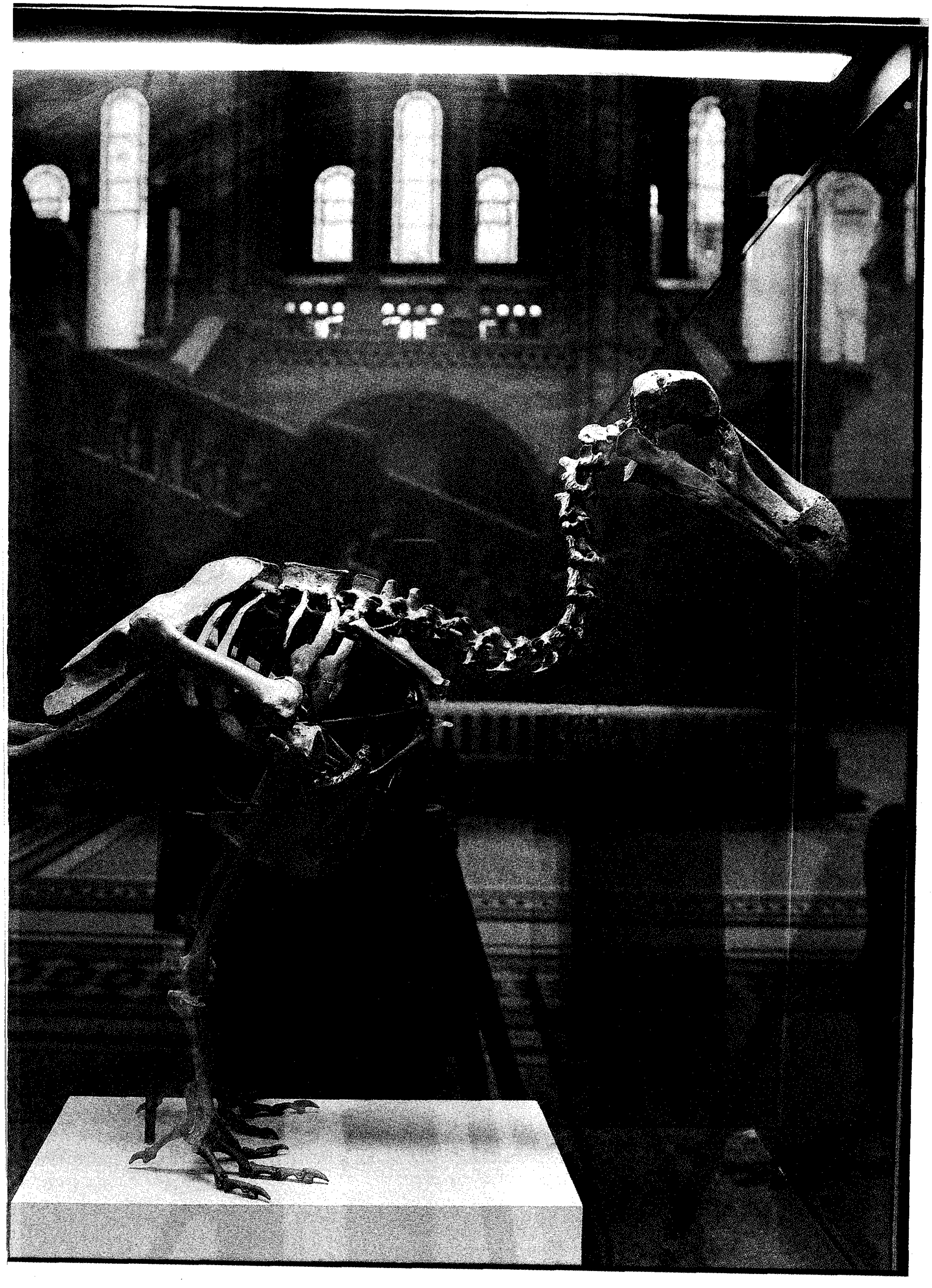
It was in this spirit that Hume surveyed the Mauritius site—through the eyes of a Dutch seafarer of the late sixteenth century. As we walked, he described how Dutch ships first arrived on the island in September, 1598, when a party of sailors from an eight-ship exploratory fleet—on its faltering way to what is now Indonesia—came ashore at a beach not far from where we were. (The spot is marked by a strangely forbidding gray stone obelisk.) The ships had been at sea for four months. "The Dutch were out of drinking water, they were starving," Hume said. "And then they saw this green and tropical land. They could just plunge their hands into the water and catch a fish. There were parrots overhead—they could literally knock them out of the sky. There were giant tortoises, totally fearless."

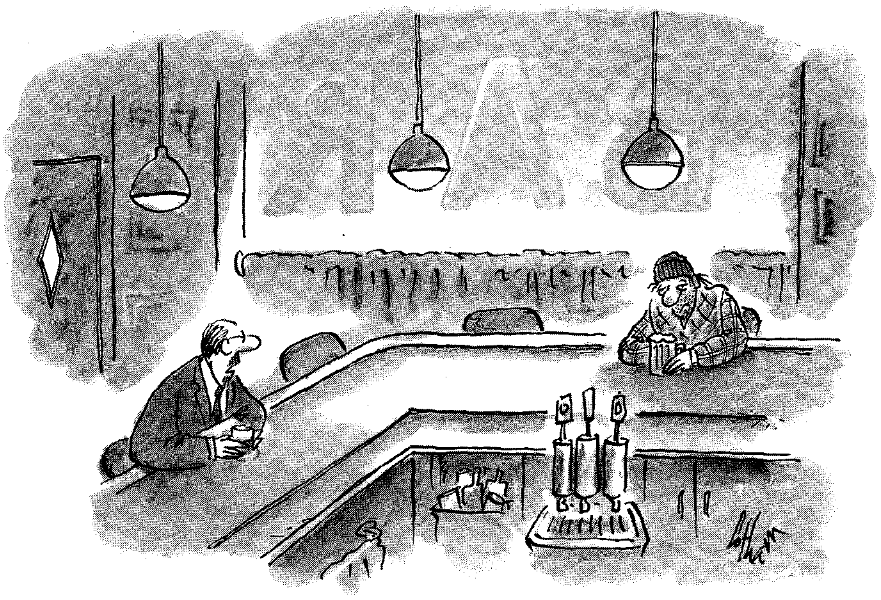
Mauritius, which has an area of seven hundred square miles and a population of one and a quarter million people, was then uninhabited. Unusually in the history of European adventure and plunder, here was an island attractive to an imperial power—arable, fairly big, and well placed for trade routes—that had no prehistory and no indigenous people. Its first human



HARRI KALLIO/BONNI BENRUBI GALLERY

A dodo skeleton in the Natural History Museum in London.





“I doubt that a children’s book about beer would sell.”

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settlers wore trousers and took notes. (Portuguese sailors had discovered the island around ninety years earlier—and it’s likely that Arab traders had visited centuries before that—but, until the Dutch arrived, nobody had lived there. Nor had anyone written about it: the Portuguese published no maps or descriptions.) At a moment in history that is tantalizingly close to the present—centuries after the human occupation of, say, New Zealand or Madagascar—Mauritius was pristine. “If Stephen Hawking is right, and we can travel through time, then I want to be here in September, 1598, with my paints under my arm, and a big pad, and just start painting,” Hume said longingly.

Today, Mauritius is a “trashed island,” he said. “There were at least twenty-five endemic birds then. Only eight survive. Almost everything we can see now was introduced by humans.” He was referring equally to the grasses, the birds, and the trees. “Those are royal palms from Cuba,” he said, and pointed. “Those are traveller palms from Madagascar.” He went on, “If you squint, you can see what the Dutch saw when they first landed.” Squinting, we removed the trees and the sugarcane, the occasional flash of an Indian ring-necked parakeet, and ten rather dour scientists, most of them Dutch archeologists and paleontologists. We were left with little more than the green contours of the land and the blue of the sky.

On that first visit, the Dutch stayed offshore for two weeks, making a number of excursions onto the island. After the ships returned to Holland, reports and illustrations of the island’s plenitude were published, including an engraving in which a pair of sailors take a ride along a beach atop a giant tortoise. Another engraving showed the first representation of the dodo: men are dragging nets for fish, while to one side a large upright bird, apparently rolling its eyes in resentment, walks past a palm tree, looking like a chick that has grown comically huge. (A nineteenth-century naturalist commented on the “gigantic immaturity” of the species.) According to the accompanying text, the bird was as big as a swan and had “a round rump with two or three curled feathers on it.” The sailors referred to it as *walghvoghel*, which translates as “repulsive bird” and is thought to refer to the dodo’s taste when cooked, although Hume’s research has led him to a kinder interpretation—that the bird was considered repulsive for its indiscriminate omnivorousness. Still, according to the first reports the *walghvoghel* compared poorly to “other small birds”; its flesh was tough and oily. In common with the island’s other birds, it was easily caught: “Because there were no inhabitants living there who made them afraid, so nor were they afraid of us, but just remained sitting, allowing us to beat them to death.”

On later visits, the Dutch came to refer to the birds as *dodaersen*—fat-asses. In English, “dodo” was in use by the sixteen-twenties, perhaps through a simple process of linguistic evolution; but Hume likes the idea that the coinage was inspired, or at least reinforced, by the bird’s call. In Mauritius, I asked him what he thought it might have sounded like. He needed a moment’s persuading, but then made a deeply resonating *woo-woo*, like bass notes coming from a loud car stereo, heard at the distance of a few blocks. Nobody knows the true sound, just as “nobody knows what the dodo ate, how it lived,” Hume said. But his bashful impression was grounded in scientific knowledge; the dodo was, as he put it, “a bloody big pigeon.”

Conservationists sometimes speak of an “analogue species”: an animal that, for the sake of the approximate restoration of an ecosystem, can stand in for one that is unavailable. In the case of the dodo, “there is no analogue,” Hume told me. “A metre-high, giant flightless pigeon, with this absurd large bill and a bare face? There’s no equivalent.” At the time of colonization, the dodo did have at least one close relative—a slenderer bird on the island of Rodrigues, three hundred and fifty miles east of Mauritius. The Rodrigues solitaire, also flightless, also became extinct following human settlement. To the extent that these two species have living relatives, they are found farther east. Among the members of the 2006 Dodo Expedition was Beth Shapiro, a researcher of ancient DNA in Oxford University’s zoology department—a thirty-one-year-old American who has already published five papers in the journal *Science*. In 2001, Shapiro analyzed DNA extracted from dodo and solitaire remains and showed that the living bird genealogically closest to them was the Nicobar pigeon, found in Southeast Asia. (The connection is distant: the dodo and the Nicobar pigeon—fully flighted and twelve inches long—separated from common ancestors around forty million years ago.) Shapiro’s research also suggested that the dodo is, as a species, much older than Mauritius, which emerged through volcanic activity no more than eight million years ago. The theory, then, is that Mauritius was colonized by a flighted version of the dodo. When the bird found itself in an environment without predators—Mauritius had no mammals besides bats—it stopped investing in wings. Instead of flying, it walked. Its wings shrank to about ten inches, as its body grew; in island geobiology, mammals tend to grow smaller over evolutionary time (like Borneo's pygmy elephants), while birds expand. The adult dodos the Dutch saw in 1598 were probably three feet high and weighed about fifty pounds.

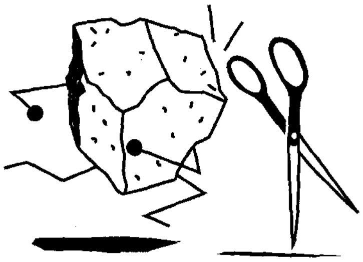
To the Dutch, the animal was noticeably strange. And these were literate times. So the dodo was given a small place in the written record, a privilege seldom before granted to a species that went on to become extinct; nobody ever recorded the taste of a woolly mammoth. (The Dutch paid almost no attention to other, duller Mauritian birds also doomed to extinction.) As a result, archives allow an occasional glimpse of the dodo: in 1611, the skin on a dodo's head was said to resemble "a monk's cowl"; seventeen years later, an English visitor saw an animal with small, diamond-like eyes, whose "visage darts forth melancholy, as sensible of Nature's injurie in framing so great a body to be guided with complementall wings, so small and impotent, that they serve only to prove her Bird." A Dutch account from 1631 described dodos as "jaunty and audacious of gait. . . . Their war weapon was their mouth, with which they could bite fiercely; their food was fruit." There are reports of the birds being caught and eaten in large quantities. We also know that some living specimens were taken off the island; there are at least two reliable accounts of live dodos making it as far as Europe. One—"a great fowle somewhat bigger than the largest Turky cock"—was shown as a novelty in London in the late sixteen-thirties.

For several decades, the Dutch used Mauritius only as a way station. In the sixteen-thirties, a permanent population began to grow: the Dutch built a fort in the southeast of the island, to support a trade in ebony (indigenous) and sugarcane (introduced), using Madagascan slaves as labor; some of these slaves escaped to the island's central highlands, starting a largely undocumented secondary colonization. Although the human population on Mauritius was never more than a few hundred during the period of Dutch control, the size of the dodo population seems to have diminished quickly; reported sightings became extremely rare. According to Hume and others, the damage was likely done less by human hunters than by other new arrivals: the monkeys, goats, pigs, and rats that competed for resources and ate dodo eggs.

The latest reliable report of a living dodo is dated 1688, but, as Hume sadly wrote in a recent paper, it had likely ceased to breed long before then, "with the last aged survivors hanging on in just a few remote places." The Dutch abandoned the island in 1710, little more than a hundred years after their arrival. Although nobody noticed at the time, the dodo was by then extinct.

On my way to Mauritius, I went to Oxford, and at the university's Museum of Natural History I met Malgosia Nowak-Kemp, a curator, who led me into a storeroom on the second floor. This was formerly a library—the site of the famous public meeting on evolution, in 1860, where Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, reportedly asked Thomas Huxley, the biologist, about his monkey ancestors. The room now houses specimens either too precious or too damaged to display. There was a tiger's skeleton that had lost some of its claws, and a cracked waterfowl diorama that showed a loon falling through a hole in a lake.

Nowak-Kemp, who was in a hurry and moved very quickly, took two gray cardboard boxes from an unmarked drawer. They contained the Oxford Dodo, whose fame derives, in part, from the fact that it inspired Charles Dodgson—the local man who wrote as Lewis Carroll—to give the bird a role in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." The first box contained the head of the bird, resting on tissue paper, in two parts. On the right lay a skull covered with mummified skin that had almost turned black; a few black hairs stood up from the top of the scalp, as if after an explosion in a cartoon. Beside that was a mask of skin from the other side of the skull; it had been peeled away by Victorian researchers. So, in an unsettling, Damien Hirst-like tableau, the bird was beak to beak with its own face. The other box held the bones of a dodo's foot; again, a sheath of skin lay alongside them. With a not quite ironic show of professional pain, Nowak-Kemp pointed to a short, neat groove along the bone and explained that this was where Beth Shapiro had taken her DNA sample, in 2001.



The fragmentary Oxford Dodo is what remains of the corpse of a bird that was probably brought to England in the mid-seventeenth century and was later kept in Oxford's Ashmolean Museum. According to legend, the stuffed bird had become so shopworn (or foul-smelling) by the mid-eighteenth century that someone at the Ashmolean tossed it onto a bonfire, at which point a visionary underling snatched the head and leg from the blaze. The story—a phoenix myth short of some key special effects—is untrue. It seems to derive from a mistranslation of museum records that were then kept in Latin. The quieter truth is that these dodo pieces somehow survived the specimen's gradual crumbling to dust, a common enough fate for animal exhibits in museums. (Nowak-Kemp is annoyed that the combustion story survives; she pointed out that Bill Bryson's recent best-seller "A Short History of Nearly Everything" repeats "this same rubbish.")

In any case, the world was left without even a dead dodo. By the nineteenth century, the bird's complete known physical existence had been reduced to the Oxford head and foot, another foot in London (since lost), a skull in Copenhagen, and a leg and a piece of beak in Prague. And, without the buttress of renown that the bird later had, the dodo could not be protected from a kind of second extinction. Because the remains were so meagre, and because the written and painted record was slight, and because the notion of species extinction had not yet been fully established, some serious-minded people came to doubt that the dodo had ever existed. An important nineteenth-century British zoological text argued that the dodo seen in a painting in the British Museum "appears to have existed only in the imagination of that artist." The alternative was that "the species has been utterly extirpated since his time, which is scarcely probable."

Not long after Mauritius was abandoned by the Dutch, it was colonized by France. A hundred years later, in 1810, Britain captured the island by force, and that action eventually triggered the posthumous recognition of the dodo; the takeover put the island within intellectual range of Britain's natural philosophers, at a time of surging national interest in observational science. In 1816, a Mauritian scientific society held a meeting to ask the island's oldest inhabitants if they remembered the dodo or any talk of it; they did not. By 1848, there was sufficient curiosity to allow the publication in Britain of a solid scientific study, "The Dodo and Its Kindred," under the patronage of Prince Albert. The authors reviewed dodo evidence—the "rude descriptions of unscientific voyagers, three or four oil paintings, and a few scattered osseous fragments"—and cleverly made the case that the bird was a peculiar form of pigeon (others had guessed vulture or ostrich). They also recognized that the dodo had been wiped out by human agency, which prompted an awkward theological dance: "We cannot see without regret the extinction of the last individual of any race of organic beings, whose progenitors colonized the pre-adamite Earth; but our consolation must be found in the reflection, that Man is destined by his Creator to 'be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth and subdue it.' "

A LIFE

I was a quiet boy a little sleepy and—amazingly—
unlike my peers—who were fond of adventures—
I didn't expect much—didn't look out the window
At school more diligent than able—docile stable

Then a normal life at the level of a regular clerk
up early street tram office again tram home sleep

I truly don't know why I'm tired uneasy in torment
perpetually even now—when I have a right to rest

I know I never rose high—I have no achievements
I collected stamps medicinal herbs was O.K. at chess

I went abroad once—on a holiday to the Black Sea
in the photo a straw hat tanned face—almost happy

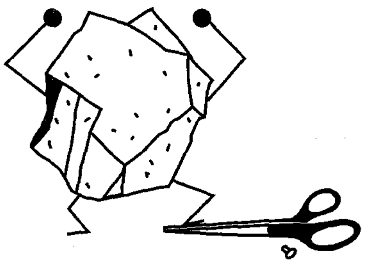
I read what came to hand: about scientific socialism
about flights into space and machines that can think
and the thing I liked most: books on the life of bees

Like others I wanted to know what I'd be after death
whether I'd get a new apartment if life had meaning

And above all how to tell the good from what's evil
to know for sure what is white and what's all black

Not long after this study was published, the British Museum announced an interest in seeing dodo remains from Mauritius. George Clark, a British schoolteacher on the island, had already been searching for some, without luck. In 1865—the year that "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" was published and began to implant its dodo illustration (cane, cuffs) in the minds of millions—a British railway engineer working in the southeast of the island noticed bones that had been disturbed by men digging peat out of a marshy hollow. The area was known as the Mare aux Songes, which is sometimes translated, wistfully, as the Sea of Dreams but is more likely named for the starchy tropical root known in Mauritian French as *songe*. The railway engineer filled his pockets, and showed his haul to Clark, who identified the bones as dodo. Clark, in turn, dug up dozens more at the site, and sent a hundred to Richard Owen at the British Museum. Owen—the man who coined the word "dinosaur"—paid Clark a hundred pounds and quickly brought out a career-boosting book, "Memoir of the Dodo." The skeleton built from those Mare aux Songes bones is the specimen still on display in the Natural History Museum in London. Clark sold hundreds of other dodo bones by auction; today, most dodo exhibits in museums derive from those sales.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a barber living in Mauritius found an almost complete dodo skeleton at an unrecorded spot on the island. (The specimen is now displayed in a Mauritian museum.) Dodo bones continued to be pulled out of the Mare aux Songes for a decade or so into the new century. After that, the site was forgotten: it was a mine that had saturated the market in its commodity.



When Hume began visiting Mauritius, in 1999, no new dodo bones had been found for almost a hundred years, and none had ever been excavated with scientific regard for position and context. He asked locals about the Mare aux Songes, and was told that the international airport had been laid on top of it. In an area of the airport used by the military, he could see a large dodo sculpture surrounded by picnic benches. These were protected by a high fence and a red-lettered sign: "Keep Out." All the same, Hume kept making inquiries, and in time he discovered that the site had survived, and lay not far from the airport's perimeter fence, in one corner of a sixty-five-hundred-acre sugar estate called Mon Trésor. But the Mare was no longer marshland. During the Second World War, in an effort to combat malarial mosquitoes, British Army soldiers stationed in Mauritius had covered the area with a layer of volcanic rock up to six feet thick.

Someone recommended a classic work—as he said
it changed his life and the lives of millions of others
I read it—I didn't change—and I'm ashamed to admit
for the life of me I don't remember the classic's name

Maybe I didn't live but endured—cast against my will
into something hard to govern and impossible to grasp
a shadow on a wall
so it was not a life
a life up to the hilt

How could I explain to my wife or to anyone else
that I summoned all my strength
so as not to commit stupidities cede to insinuation
not to fraternize with the strongest

It's true—I was always pale. Average. At school
in the Army in the office at home and at parties

Now I'm in the hospital dying of old age.
Here is the same uneasiness and torment.
Born a second time perhaps I'd be better.

I wake at night in a sweat. Stare at the ceiling. Silence.
And again—one more time—with a bone-weary arm
I chase off the bad spirits and summon the good ones.

—*Zbigniew Herbert*

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Alissa Valles.*)

Now grasses and ferns were growing on this hard surface: a crust of meadow sealing a swamp, like a crème brûlée. Hume paced the land, and even tried to dig by hand through the rock. ("How sad is that?" he asked me.) He had little doubt that many dodo remains lay beneath.

Meanwhile, another Briton was taking similar walks. Alan Grihault, a retired teacher, moved to the island with his Mauritian-born wife in 2000, and was surprised to learn that there was no standard glossy dodo book—the kind that tourists might buy in a hotel lobby and then forget to read. He began to gather material for one. He, too, found his way to the Mare aux Songes and, in his mind, became the site's unofficial caretaker. "It was my place, a tranquil place," Grihault said when we met. He kept an eye out for dodo bones that he hoped might emerge on the surface; none did. (Sara Grihault, who works for the British High Commission, told me that her husband's dodo interest "sometimes gets to be a bit too much. Only two of us at home, so I hear everything, and sometimes twice, when he explains it to friends. Luckily I have the ability to switch off.")

Grihault, whose good nature can be hidden behind a take-charge manner and a barking voice, pictured himself not only as the author of the coffee-table dodo text—which he eventually produced, "Dodo: The Bird Behind the Legend"—but as a player in a new dodo industry in Mauritius. He was sure that the Mare aux Songes had potential as a tourist destination and, in 2002, sought to interest the landowners in the idea. The estate was owned by Mon Trésor & Mon Désert, which also operates two other sugar estates on the island. Grihault submitted two memos about the Mare aux Songes to the M.T.M.D. board. His vision in those memos (the immoderation of which he now concedes) included plans for a dodo museum; a children's play area, with a giant chess set featuring Lewis Carroll characters; a treasure trail; a "Dutch homestead"; a pirate museum; and a shop selling postcards that "could be taken from the book 'Dodo: The Bird Behind the Legend.'"

None of this was done. But, in the years following Grihault's presentation, M.T.M.D. began weighing the touristic potential of its land, in part because the European Union decided to end the practice of buying sugar from many former colonies at generous fixed prices. "Sugar goes down, dodo goes up," in the words of one Dodo Expedition scientist. It seemed possible that Mauritius's abandoned dodo mine might again turn a profit.

In October, 2005, Christian Foo Kune, the general manager of M.T.M.D., was welcoming when Grihault brought two affable, soft-spoken Dutch scientists onto his land: Kenneth Rijsdijk, a physical geographer, and Frans Bunnik, an expert on ancient and fossilized pollen. The two men were on their first visit to Mauritius, at the invitation of Pieter Floore, a Dutch archeologist who had been working for years at the site of the Dutch fort of the sixteen-thirties. Rijsdijk and Bunnik wanted to sample a range of Mauritian ecologies; toward the end of their stay, Grihault, who had introduced himself, offered to be their guide, and drove them to Mon Trésor. "We were humoring him, in a positive sense," Rijsdijk said. "An eccentric person with a dodo fascination, very sincere, but I'm a specialist in sand and gravel, which couldn't be more boring."

The Dutchmen, who were carrying a hand-operated corkscrew-like device, were invited to take a sample of earth from the Mare aux Songes. They had to break through the crust of rock—a gruelling process that nearly defeated them. But they did it, and pulled out a tube of mud, leaving a hole in the earth. The next day, Bunnik reached into the ground and pulled out a piece of bone stained brown; he recognized it as the tibia of a large bird and said to Rijsdijk, "We're in deep shit. I think this is dodo."

At the start of the 2006 Dodo Expedition, I visited Christian Foo Kune in his office, a room with a high ceiling, parquet flooring, and, on the walls, seven sets of deer antlers. "The Mare aux Songes was a place where you couldn't grow anything," he said. "You couldn't plant cane—it's a depression, always muddy. And then, suddenly, through the expert eyes of our friends, the scientists, it becomes a treasure." He showed me an aerial photograph of the estate and traced out his ambitions for the future, starting with the coastline half a mile from the Mare aux Songes: "There will be a golf course here, probably a hotel here, a residential area, and this is a public space, a common place, with trees and shade . . ."

The Dodo Expedition, an adventure in diplomacy and marketing as much as in paleontology, was made up of the three Dutchmen from the previous year and a number of scientists from Holland, Britain, and Mauritius, including Julian Hume—the team's true dodo expert—and Beth Shapiro, the expedition's academic highflier, who hoped to extract DNA from new dodo remains and perhaps use it to gauge changes in dodo population size over time. Hosted by M.T.M.D., the expedition was allowed the use of a single-story house in the company village on the Mon Trésor estate, a place of tall palm trees and stray dogs built on a grid around a sugar mill: a Dutch enclave on an African tropical island that is now inhabited mostly by Francophone people of Indian ancestry. Shapiro, the only woman researcher, called it "the frat house."

The team's ambition was expressed, above all, as a rather stern negative: the Dodo Expedition was *not* prospecting for dodos. The project wanted to distinguish itself from George Clark's treasure dig of the eighteen-sixties. But the Dutchmen were also hoping to edge away from their own brief, impromptu dig of 2005. That year, when Bunnik lifted the first dodo bone out of the dirt, he foresaw trouble. "I immediately thought, How can we manage this scientifically, when even archeologists will want to fill their pockets with dodo bones?" Hoping that the excavation would remain a secret but knowing that it would not, they borrowed a digger, and in two days found nearly a thousand bones, including a dodo beak, which were taken into the possession of M.T.M.D. Then, keeping to their schedule, they left the island.

This did not look good. Although the excavation had been done with the landowners' encouragement, they did not have permission from the Mauritian National Heritage Fund, as was perhaps required. (This is disputed.) Nor had any Mauritian expertise been sought. Some local journalists and academics, including Vijaya Teelock, who teaches history at the University of Mauritius, detected a neo-colonial slight. Teelock told me that there was "no reason not to have a Mauritian-directed project" at the Mare aux Songes. In a similar spirit, the English-language *News on Sunday* ran an editorial cartoon showing two goofy, salivating, wide-eyed Caucasians chasing a dodo skeleton. The dodo was saying, "You've eaten all my flesh, can't you allow my bones to rest in peace?" And there were rumors that the Dutchmen had smuggled dodo remains out of the country by disguising them as chicken bones. This was false, although Foo Kune did send two dodo bones to Holland by D.H.L. after the Dutch team returned home; these were used in DNA and carbon-dating experiments.

For the 2006 expedition, then, the team made sure that it had its permits. It also asked Anwar Janoo, a Mauritian paleontologist who has published on the dodo, to participate, and it invested heavily in waterproof labels and Ziploc bags, to establish a bone-accounting system that could withstand scientific and political scrutiny. Every soil sample would be studied, layer by layer, to distinguish one historical period from the next. (Shapiro was somewhat skeptical: it was odd to put so much emphasis on formal archeological techniques, she said, when working in a swamp that had been partially dug up for fertilizer in the nineteenth century, dug up again for dodos, and later covered with rocks.) The expedition also underscored its interest in all flora and fauna at the site, not just dodos. That ecological catholicism was sincere but sat a little awkwardly with what might be called the team's brand: the dodo in the project name, on its letterhead, and on the bright-orange polo shirts worn by the scientists.

Hume, a professional scientist with something of the amateur's obsessiveness, had the task of identifying bird remains. He could recognize, with uncanny speed and accuracy, every bone from every Mauritian bird, even when the specimen was smaller than a toothpick. On a warm day in June, he and his colleagues began working their way through the first batch of mud at the Mare aux Songes, and I was watching as someone brought him a pale bone covered in dark earth. It seemed to weigh almost nothing. Hume said, "That's a dodo pelvis." A little later: "That's a dodo vertebra." Later, giddily: "Ooh, that's a nice humerus. Fantastic."

On that first day of excavation, bones seemed to be spilling out of the ground. A fragment of the Mauritian giant tortoise (such as Dutch sailors once rode upon) that at the start of the day would have brought the team together in a cooing huddle of self-congratulation was, a little later, washed and processed without comment. Along with the giant tortoise (extinct since the eighteenth century), the team also found bones of the Mauritian giant skink, a three-foot-long lizard, also now extinct, along with hundreds of seeds of the now rare tambalacoque tree. The abundance of the site was startling. "Are we looking at a tsunami that washed in bones and seeds from the region?" Bunnik asked himself as he ate his picnic lunch under a tree. "It doesn't look like it, because we'd find coarse coral rocks, which we haven't. Or was it cyclonic? Huge rainfall, trees falling all around? A period of cyclones over a hundred years?" Rijsdijk allowed himself a moment of wonder at the scientists' proximity to "a world that didn't understand violence and competition." (In the past, dodo bones have been found that show a healed fracture—an unimaginable thing in most environments, where a broken leg is an animal's death sentence.)

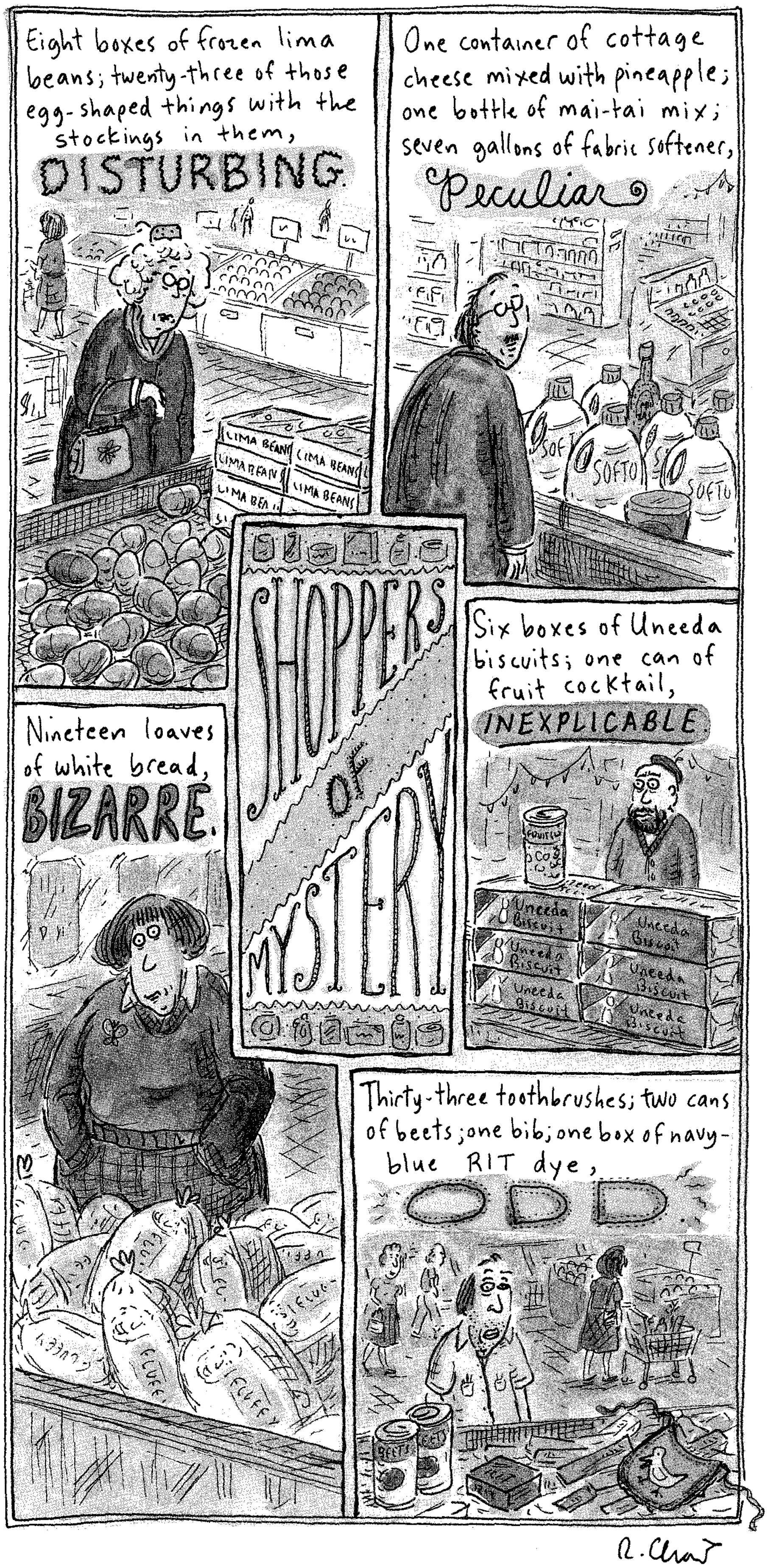
That night, the collected material was placed in plastic wrap and laid out on the floor of a company training room in the shadow of the sugar factory—all except the dodo bones, which were locked up in Foo Kune's office, in a large antique safe that contained nothing except shotguns and dodo. "The safe may be a little much," Rijsdijk said.

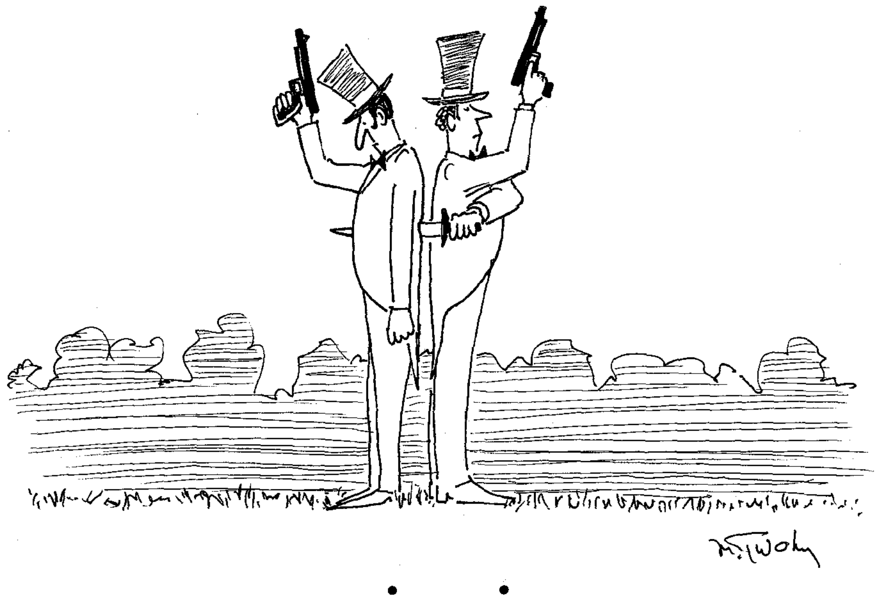
At the bungalow, which smelled strongly of dirty socks, Hume showed me a sketchbook with some of his recent bird paintings: nineteen extinct species of Réunion, the French island a hundred miles to the west of Mauritius. They were done in a solid Sunday-painter realist style, with the added element of resurrection: long-dead birds strolled and pecked in the foreground, against backgrounds of forest and mountain. While some of the images had called upon strong evidence—surviving skins, skeletons, and drawings—others had to rely on little more than seventeenth-century gossip. "This one is really a shot in the dark," Hume said, stopping at one page. "A single observer mentioned a parrot, no bones were found, no other description made." On another page: "This one, known only by one bone." And then, "The only record was 'a pigeon with blue wings.' " Hume added, "I still think the best science was done in the nineteenth century. They didn't rely on taking stuff to a laboratory and getting results. They had to look at the bones, read the accounts." On the living-room wall, someone had put up a poster-size outline of a dodo skeleton; the bones that had been found that day were shaded in with a red pencil.

In the botanical gardens of Curepipe, an inland Mauritian town, an unmarked palm tree stands thirty feet high, surrounded by scaffolding. This is a kind of hurricane palm, *Hyophorbe amaricaulis:* a species indigenous to Mauritius that is as close to extinction as a non-extinct species can be. The specimen here is the only known example in the world. As I stood beside it one afternoon in light rain, Faizal Bhoondoo, a gardener, walked up the path, and we talked for a few minutes about the prices of mobile phones in the United States and species extinction. Bhoondoo, who is a Muslim, said, "Extinction is God's will. If God wants it, it's impossible to know why." He added, "Time and death wait for no man." I asked him if it would be God's will if someone took the machete he was carrying and brought down the last remaining *Hyophorbe amaricaulis*, making the species at that moment extinct. "Yes," he said, although he added that he would think badly of the person who did that, and he tightened his grip on his machete.

Mauritius accepts its role as the world's capital of extinction with little apparent discomfort. Though the dodo may be known elsewhere as a forlorn symbol of human toxicity, in Mauritius the bird is a grinning caricature inside tourist snow globes and the premise for a "dodo" cocktail that carries the kind of surface froth you see in a heavily polluted river. In different conversations, I heard that the dodo was still alive in Madagascar; was a myth; and was "crazy and unintelligent." There was no regret: when I asked Foo Kune if there were risks in making too close a national identification with the bird, and therefore with untimely death, he said, "The Dutch destroyed the dodo, and we Mauritians had nothing to do with it"—a bold rhetorical stand. In the Mauritius Institute, in the capital, Port Louis,

SKETCHBOOK BY ROZ CHAST


SHOPPERS OF MYSTERY
Eight boxes of frozen lima beans; twenty-three of those egg-shaped things with the stockings in them,
DISTURBING
LIMA BEANS
One container of cottage cheese mixed with pineapple; one bottle of mai-tai mix; seven gallons of fabric softener,
Peculiar
SOFTO
Six boxes of Uneeda biscuits; one can of fruit cocktail,
INEXPLICABLE
Uneeda Biscuit
Fruit Cocktail
Nineteen loaves of white bread,
BIZARRE.
FLUFF
Thirty-three toothbrushes; two cans of beets; one bib; one box of navy-blue RIT dye,
ODD.
BEETS
R. Chast



the placard for the dodo skeleton on display is unexpectedly upbeat. It reads, in part, "The dodo's extinction helped to put Mauritius on the map." A Mauritian told me that his elderly uncle still said how glad he was that dodos were wiped out, because they would have disturbed his flower beds and "crapped all over the lawn."

One morning, Kenneth Rijsdijk and Frans Bunnik left the Mon Trésor estate, drove for a few miles on roads that made right-angle turns through the sugarcane, and stopped at a large house with a gravel drive. Pierre Bourgault du Coudray, a local landowner now retired from business, met us at the door, with two small yapping dogs, and led the way to a living room full of paintings and fine furniture, an environment that made his guests feel weather-beaten and unwashed. He had been watching the French Open on television; he left the set on, and muted the sound. He was elderly and rather frail, but had an air of ruling-class authority.

It is a part of dodo mythology, in Mauritius and beyond, that the birds used gizzard stones—that they swallowed stones and retained them in their guts to grind away at stubborn elements in their diet. Some living birds do exactly that, but there's no evidence that dodos did; and if they did the stones would likely be small, jagged, and anonymous, according to Hume. But the Dodo Expedition had been invited to inspect a precious piece of rock in Bourgault du Coudray's private collection, and it was thought politic to go. "You have to do it—it's part of the game," Rijsdijk had said. (The game also included a hint of national penitence: team members rarely left the estate without someone saying, "Where are you from? Holland? Oh, you ate all the dodos.")

When Bourgault du Coudray left the room to fetch the stone, Rijsdijk took out a magnifying glass and said quietly that he hoped the tool would make him look more professional. His host returned with a smooth, round object that was the size of a plum. Speaking French, he said that he had found it in a nearby field about twenty-five years earlier. Rijsdijk looked at it through his magnifying glass. For this exercise in courtesy, the room was solemnly quiet. Rijsdijk said that he could see organic matter lodged in tiny holes that dotted the surface of the stone, suggesting it had come from peat, and so *might* have been dug out of the Mare aux Songes. Then he passed it to Bunnik, who said exactly the same, with the same generosity. He managed to add, "The rounding is unusual."

Bourgault du Coudray, who had no doubt that he owned a dodo's gizzard stone, said, in English, "It's unique in the world."

The Dutchmen nodded. "There's no process we can think of that would produce this remarkable roundness," Rijsdijk said, choosing his words carefully.

The dodo team's routine was to rise very early, take a minibus to the Mare aux Songes, then sieve mud with earnest good humor until dusk. After the researchers returned to the bungalow each day, a Mon Trésor cook made them supper, and then they slumped on low foam furniture and watched soccer on a television that had a garishly colored—and in other ways unforgivably inaccurate—model dodo on top of it. The team worked without interruption, although one day Hume drove two hours to Port Louis, to inspect some of the hundreds of dodo bones at the Mauritius Institute. They were in plastic sandwich boxes on the second floor—and minimally catalogued—and sounded like domino tiles when they rattled against one another. Leaving the museum, Hume passed a full-scale century-old model of a dodo: a squat, fat exhibit made of goose feathers and plaster. "It should be more upright, more athletic—the neck should be longer," Hume said, but without any note of complaint. "It's a nice image. At the Natural History Museum in London, there was talk of getting rid of these reconstructions because they're not accurate. But they're so important historically! This was considered natural at the time; let's respect that."

At the bungalow, the dodo poster taped to the living-room wall was becoming redder, day by day and vertebra by vertebra. After a week's digging, there was so much material that the team ran out of plastic bags. The profusion of fossils (or, more accurately, subfossils; these hadn't turned to stone) gave the project a sense of momentum that almost disguised a hint of disappointment. Were the researchers making true scientific progress? To put it baldly, would they be able to publish in *Nature* or *Science*? They had collected close to four thousand bones but had identified no new species, as they might have expected, and although they had unearthed the rare jaw of an extinct parrot and a near-complete carapace of a Mauritian giant tortoise, as well as a hard, black stumpy bone eventually identified as a tortoise's tail vertebra—the first ever seen—they had not found any extraordinary, unprecedented dodo specimen that would have made front-page news or significantly expanded dodo knowledge. The dodo looked likely to remain known and unknown; that is, Hume could continue to paint the bird with some anatomical confidence but would still have to accept that almost everything else about it remained hidden, and no less hidden for the discovery of dozens of fresh bones. The expedition had thought it might find a dodo infant, say, or an egg, or a whole bird. (Hume had hoped to dig up the world's first complete skeleton, which would have given science the sure knowledge of the ratio of a dodo's bone measurements; with that information, one would know the size of every dodo ever unearthed, even if represented by only a single bone.) But no such discoveries had been made.

It was also becoming clear that the team was finding material from a fairly narrow historical range, at a moment perhaps four thousand years ago. Instead of following a biological narrative, the expedition had cracked open a time capsule. This meant that Shapiro could not try to calculate rises and falls in dodo population sizes, as she had done for mammoths and bison: that kind of work requires comparisons of mitochondrial DNA across historical time. And the team would be unable to make inferences about the impact of the Dutch arrival on the virgin flora and fauna of Mauritius, as had been hoped: the Mare aux Songes held no remains that could be dated from after the start of human colonization. It was becoming clear that by the nineteen-forties, when volcanic rock sealed the marsh, the top layers of soil had long since been removed, either by natural means or by people. Hume realized that, against his usual instincts, he was lamenting the site's lack of introduced species. In the earth below the crust of rock, there were no signs of rats, monkeys, or hubcaps.

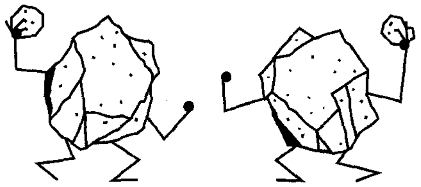
"Can we say the state of preservation at the Mare aux Songes is remarkable?" Foo Kune asked the team anxiously one day, inviting them to stoke his enthusiasm. "Can I say that to my boss?"

"Yes, yes!" they cried.

In the absence of a trophy dodo specimen, the researchers focussed on the broader ecological picture—the stuff that fills the private dreams of pollen men and gravel men but is harder to put in a press release. Members of the 2006 expedition were becoming curiously aligned with their Dutch counterparts four hundred years earlier: the news that they would carry away—their scientific discovery—would be a glimpse of a lost landscape, and the dodo would stand on the edge of the frame. The team would be able to report that several thousand years ago a lava tunnel collapsed and filled with fresh water, and, in a fairly dry environment, this lake had drawn a clattering, shrieking crowd of tortoises and birds that ate and fed and mated beneath trees that dropped fruit into the water. "Have you heard giant tortoises mate?" Hume asked me. "And dodos were almost certainly very territorial animals—this might have been a big fighting area, with the strongest animals defending territory around the water. Loads of movement and activity, almost like an African watering hole." Perhaps forgivably, Hume began calling it a "dodo oasis."

Volcanic islands are acidic, and their biological past is rarely preserved, but at the Mare aux Songes acidity had been buffered by alkaline coral sand blown in from the beach. Even the tiniest bones had been preserved, along with seeds—"as fresh as if they'd fallen the day before," in Hume's words. Over time—perhaps in a period of only a few hundred years—the lake had silted up, leaving the Mare aux Songes as an immaculate record of a recent prehuman moment. "It's unheard of, to find this on an oceanic island, this concentration, a snapshot of an entire ecosystem," Rijsdijk said. More research would certainly reveal more detail about the fruit bats, tambalacoque trees, and dodos that lived near the lake. And Hume would be able to add more and more detail to his painted restorations of Edenic Mauritius. Even after this first proper excursion, the team felt able to claim membership in an exclusive club: they began to call the Mare aux Songes a *Lagerstätte*, the word that paleontologists use to refer to fossil sites that are exceptionally bountiful—either in concentration or in preservation of specimens—such as the Burgess Shale, in Canada, and Chengjiang, in China.

The Dodo Expedition involved a fairly innocent exchange of deceptions: a group of Mauritian landowners exaggerated their interest in science, for the sake of future tourists, and, in return, Dutch scientists exaggerated their interest in dodos, for the sake of access to a prehistoric marsh. The deal seemed to hold, although one sensed its fragility when, one afternoon not long before the team flew back to Europe, Christian Foo Kune brought the board of M.T.M.D., including the managing director, Georges Leung Shing, for a visit to the Mare aux Songes. They stepped out of a minibus into thick mud. Leung Shing was dressed as if for a business lunch in Paris, and his hands constantly darted—to his face, his cuffs, his collar—as he and his colleagues tiptoed from dry spot to dry spot.



The group stopped under a tree, Hume showed them some dodo bones, and Leung Shing asked Beth Shapiro whether, using the kind of material that the expedition was unearthing, she could clone a dodo.

"No," she said, in a friendly enough way.

"Really?" Leung Shing asked. "But they're cloning things today. So why not?" His tone was playful, but he was more than half serious.

"They're cloning things that are still *alive*," Shapiro said. She then talked about the importance of protecting surviving species before trying to revive extinct ones. (A researcher who works with ancient DNA has to have a cocktail-party stump speech about dinosaur and dodo clones.) Besides, she added, the environment in which dodos once thrived had disappeared.

"We can re-create that environment!" Leung Shing said. He reminded Shapiro that M.T.M.D. had already begun to replant some of Mauritius's threatened indigenous trees. "By the time we clone the dodo, we might have the habitat for them," he said.

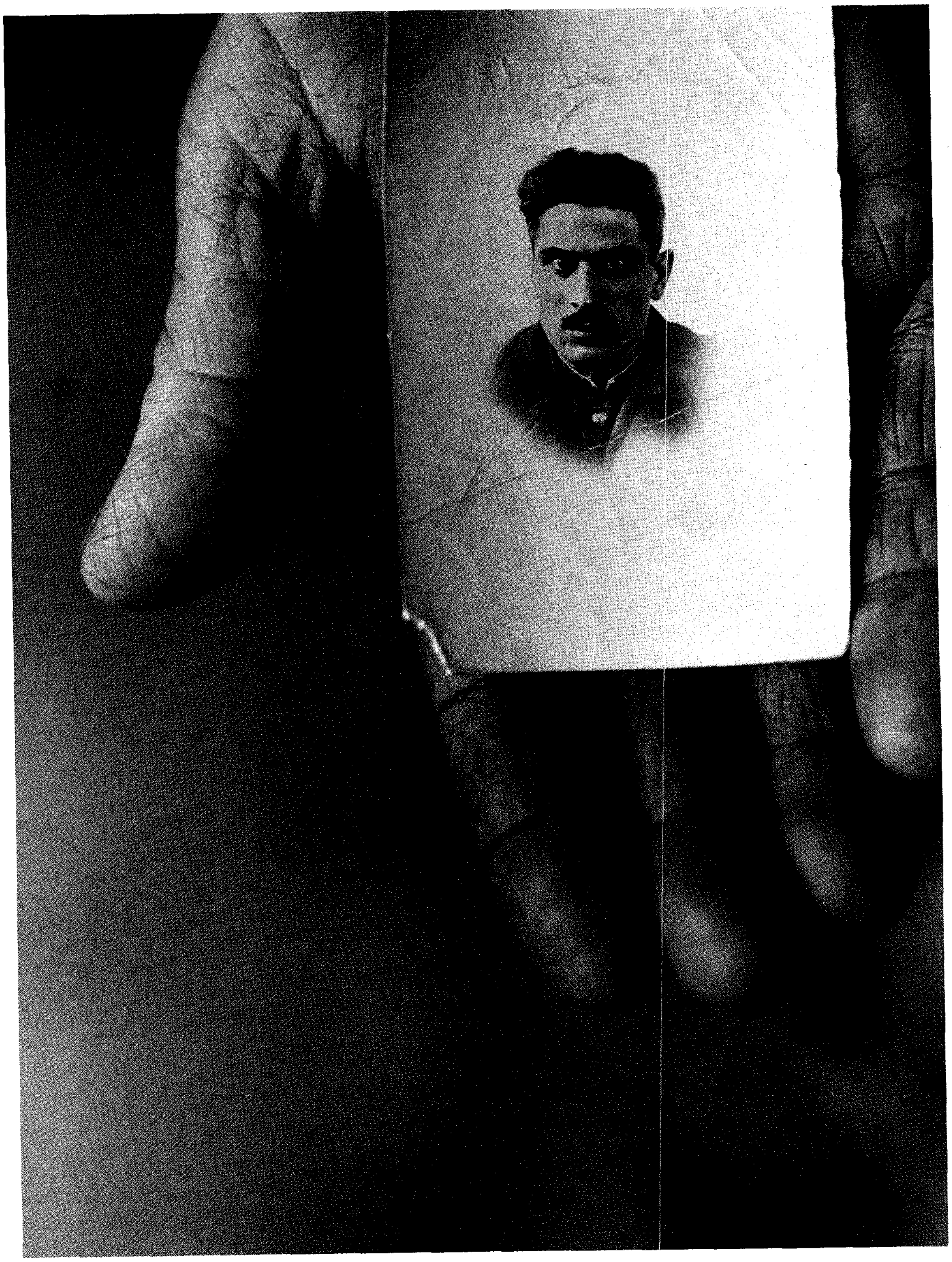
"Dodoland?" Shapiro said, smiling. "It's not going to happen."

"You're killing me," he told her. "Last night, I was so excited about coming down here that I had a dream and saw some dodos walking around. Give me hope!" But Shapiro could not. Leung Shing made a joke about finding a more accommodating DNA researcher, to replace her, and then returned to the minibus. The scientists went back to work, behind a mound of dirt. ♦

FICTION

HEIRS

BY AMOS OZ



The stranger was not a stranger. Something in his figure repelled but also intrigued Aryeh Zelnik at very first sight, if it was indeed first sight; it seemed to Aryeh Zelnik that he somehow remembered that face, those long arms, almost down to the knees. Remembered vaguely, as if from an entire lifetime ago.

The man parked his car right at the front gate. It was a dusty beige car; its back and side windows were covered with a crazy quilt of colorful stickers, all sorts of pronouncements, warnings, and slogans with exclamation points. He locked the car but took the time to check door by door, shaking each one vigorously to make sure that they were all properly closed. He lightly stroked the hood, then stroked it again, as if it were not a car but an old horse, tied to a fence and given a friendly pat to indicate that the wait would not be long. Then he pushed open the gate and strode toward the front porch, which was shaded by a grape arbor. His walk looked jerky and a bit painful, as if he were stepping barefoot on hot sand.

Aryeh Zelnik, seeing and unseen from his place in the hammock in the corner of the porch, had observed the guest from the moment he parked his car. But, as hard as he tried, he could not bring to mind who this stranger-unstranger was. Where had he met him? When? On one of his trips overseas? In the Army? At the office? On campus? Or perhaps back in his school days? The man's expression was wily and jubilant, as if he had successfully played a trick and was now enjoying his victim's agony. Behind, or beneath, the strange face was the elusive insinuation of an irritating, familiar face, a face that unsettled Aryeh Zelnik. The face of someone who had once treated him badly? Or perhaps the opposite—someone to whom Aryeh had done some forgotten injustice?

It was like a dream, nine-tenths submerged, with only the tip still showing. So Aryeh Zelnik decided not to get up to greet the arrival. He'd receive him from here, in his hammock, on the front porch.

The stranger skipped and wove hastily up the path from the gate to the porch steps, his small eyes darting relentlessly left and right as if he feared being discovered too early, or as if he were afraid that a furious dog was about to jump out at him from the thicket of thorny bougainvillea bushes that grew on both sides of the path.

The insipid, yellowing hair, the red neck whose crumpled, slack skin was reminiscent of a turkey's crop, the watery, turbid eyes that flitted like intrusive fingers, the long chimpanzee arms—it all gave rise to a vague anxiety in Aryeh Zelnik.

From his hidden vantage point in the shade of climbing vines, he noted that the man was large-bodied but a bit flabby, as if he had just recovered from a serious illness—as if he had always been thickset and had only recently caved in, shrunk within his own skin. The summer sports jacket he wore, a grubby beige with swollen pockets, also looked too big for him, and hung loosely on his shoulders.

Even though it was the end of the summer and the path was dry, the stranger took the time to wipe his shoes carefully on the mat at the bottom of the steps. When he had finished, he lifted each foot in turn and took stock of the cleanliness of his soles. Only when he was satisfied did he ascend the steps. He examined the screen door at the top, then, after knocking politely a few times without receiving a response, he finally redirected his eyes and discovered the man of the house vegetating placidly in his hammock, surrounded by large potted flowers and planters of ferns, in the corner of the grape arbor.

The guest immediately put on a broad smile and almost bowed, then hemmed and cleared his throat before opening with a declaration:

"A lovely place you have here, Mr. Zelkin. Breathtaking! It's really the Provence of the state of Israel! Provence? Tuscany! The view! The woods! The vineyards! Tel Ilan is quite simply the most enchanting village in this entire Levantine country. Very nice! Good morning, Mr. Zelkin. Excuse me. I hope that I am not, by chance, disturbing you just a tiny bit?"

Aryeh Zelnik returned a dry "Good morning," and corrected the error. His name was Zelnik, not Zelkin, and he was sorry, but in our house we don't buy anything from salesmen.

"Quite right! Absolutely right!" the man said approvingly as he wiped the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve. "After all, how are we to know that the man before us is a salesman and not a swindler? Or, God forbid, a criminal who has come to case the territory for a gang of burglars? But I, Mr. Zelnik, am, in the matter at hand—I am quite certainly not a salesman. I am, I beg you, Maftzir!"

"What?"

"Maftzir. Wolf Maftzir, attorney-at-law. From the firm of Lotem-Prozhinin. It is my pleasure, Mr. Zelnik. I have come to you, sir, with regard to a subject that, how may I put it—or perhaps it would be best if we did not make any attempt to define the subject but simply got straight to the matter itself. May I sit down? It will be a more or less personal inquiry—not personal for me, certainly not; I would never dare intrude and disturb you without advance notice about my own personal affairs, although of course we tried, we definitely tried, quite a number of times we tried, but your telephone number is unlisted, and you did not see fit to respond to our letters. We therefore decided to try our luck with an unscheduled visit, and we apologize profusely for the disturbance. This is certainly not common practice for us, to invade a person's privacy, in particular if the individual in question lives in one of the loveliest spots in the entire country. In any case, as I mentioned, this is definitely not just a personal matter of ours. Absolutely not. Under no circumstances. In fact, quite the opposite. The purpose is—how may we put it delicately? Perhaps we should say it this way: the purpose is a personal matter, sir, of yours. A personal matter of yours and not just ours. More precisely, it touches, in fact, on your family. Or on your family in a general way and, in particular, on one member of your family, Mr. Zelnik, a specific member of your family. You won't object if we sit and talk for a few moments? I promise you that I will do my best to insure that the entire matter not take us more than ten minutes. Although, in fact, it really depends on you, Mr. Zelkin."

Aryeh Zelnik said, "Zelnik."

And then he said, "Sit down."

And immediately added, "Not there. Here."

Because the fat, or formerly fat, man had just landed on the double hammock, thigh to thigh with his host. A miasma of thick smells surrounded his body like an entourage—smells of digestion, of socks, of talcum powder, and of armpits. Spread over all these smells was a faint netting of pungent aftershave lotion. Aryeh Zelnik suddenly thought of his father, who had also swathed his body's smells in the pungent aroma of aftershave.

The moment Aryeh Zelnik told him,

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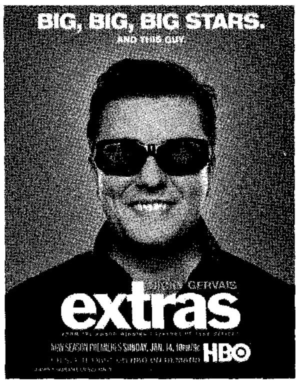

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"Not there. Here," the guest rose and staggered a bit, his ape arms pulling at his knees. He apologized and moved the rear of his overlarge pants to the spot designated for him, on a wooden bench on the other side of the garden table. The table was a country type, made of half-planed boards, like the ties under railroad tracks. It was important to Aryeh that his sick mother should, under no circumstances, see this guest from her window—not even his back, not even his silhouette against the grape arbor. So he pointed him to a place that was not visible from the window. She would be shielded from his fat, cantorial voice by her deafness.

Three years earlier, Na'ama, Aryeh Zelnik's wife, had gone to visit her best friend, Sara Grant, in San Diego. She hadn't returned. She did not, in her letters, say explicitly that she wanted to leave him but, instead, first hinted at it tactfully: "In the meantime, I won't be coming back as planned." Half a year later, she wrote, "I'm still staying with Sara." And, a few months later, "There's no need to keep waiting for me. I'm working with Sara in her rejuvenating studio." And in another letter, "Sara and I are good together—we have similar karma." Then she wrote again, "Our spiritual teacher feels that it is right for us not to give each other up. You will be fine. You aren't mad, are you?"

Their married daughter, Hila, wrote to him from Boston, "Dad, I suggest, for your own good, don't pressure Mom. Find yourself another life."

And because he and his son, Eldad, had long ago severed all contact, and because apart from this family he had no person close to him, he had decided last year to liquidate his apartment on Mt. Carmel and go back to live with his mother in the old house in Tel Ilan, to live off the rental income from the two apartments in Haifa that he owned, and to devote himself to his hobby, building model airplanes.

In this way, he had found himself another life, as his daughter had suggested.

In his youth, Aryeh Zelnik had served in the marine commandos. From his earliest childhood, he had been unafraid of danger, undaunted by enemy gunfire or climbing up cliffs. But, in later years, he had developed a potent fear of darkness in an empty house. So he finally chose to go back to live with his mother, in the old house where he was born and grew up, on the outskirts of the village of Tel Ilan. His mother, Rosalia, was ninety years old, deaf, and extremely bent over, and she seldom spoke. Most of the time, she let him take care of the house without interfering, almost without comment or question. Sometimes it passed through Aryeh Zelnik's head that his mother might fall ill, or age so much that she could not survive without constant care, and he would have to feed, clean, and diaper her, or bring in a nurse, and then the house would lose its serenity and his life would be bared to strange eyes. On the other hand, it also occurred to him that his mother's decline might give him a logical and emotional justification for transferring her to an appropriate institution, and then the entire house would be his. If he wanted, he could bring in a new, beautiful wife. Or not a wife but, instead, a series of young women. Maybe he could even knock down the inside walls and redo the house. Another life would begin.

But, in the meantime, both of them, the son and his mother, lived in the murky, antiquated house, in peace and in silence. Each morning, a cleaning woman came, bringing with her the groceries he'd requested. She cleaned, cooked, put things in order, and then, after serving mother and son their lunch, went quietly on her way. Most of the day, the mother sat in her room and read old books, while Aryeh Zelnik listened to the radio in his room and built airplanes out of light wood.

The stranger suddenly gave a knowing, ingratiating smile, a smile like a wink, as if he were proposing to his host, "Let's sin together!" But, also, as if he were apprehensive that his proposal might get him punished. And he asked warmly, "Excuse me, perhaps, if you don't mind, I might take a bit of that, please?"

And because it seemed to him that his host had nodded his head the man picked up the glass pitcher of ice water with a slice of lemon and a few sprigs of mint that stood on the table and filled the single glass, Aryeh Zelnik's glass. He then brought the glass to his fleshy lips, finishing it off with five or six loud, expansive slurps, poured himself another half glass, and gulped that, too, thirstily, then immediately set out to justify himself:

"My apologies! It's just that, here on

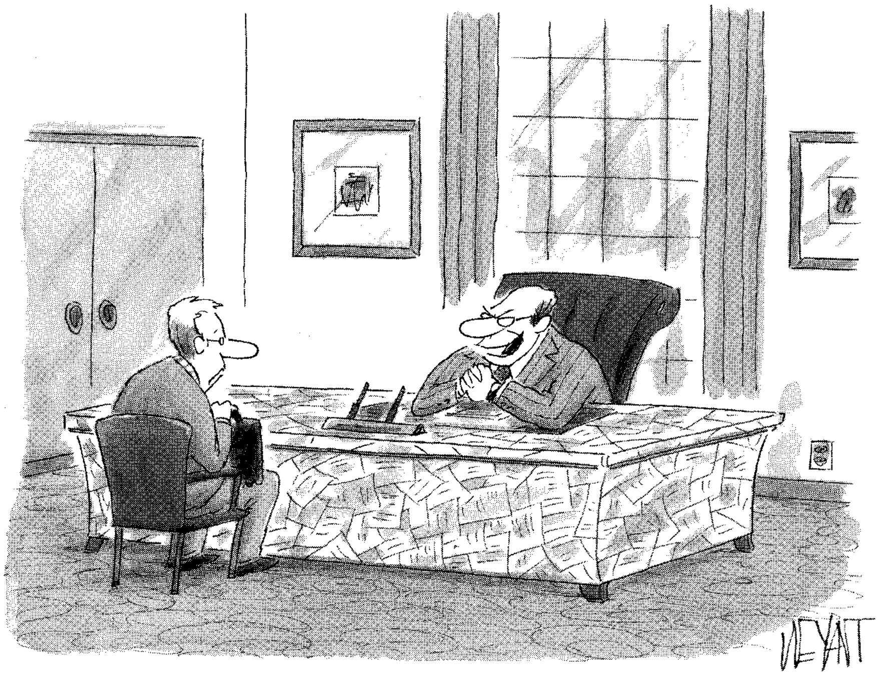
your beautiful porch, one doesn't feel how hot the day is. It's a very hot day! Nevertheless, despite the oppressive heat this spot is simply charming! Tel Ilan is really the loveliest village in the entire country! Provence! Provence? Tuscany! Forests! Vineyards! Hundred-year-old farmhouses, red roofs, and such tall cypresses! So what do you think, Mr. Zelnik? Would it be more comfortable for you if we were to chat a while longer about its loveliness? Or will you allow me to go straight, without any circumlocution, to our little agenda?"

Aryeh Zelnik said, "I'm listening."

"The Zelnik family, the descendants of Leon Akabia Zelnik. You were, if I'm not mistaken, among the very first families in the village? Among the earliest founders? No? Ninety years ago? Almost a hundred, even?"

"His name was Akiva Aryeh, not Leon Akabia."

"Of course," the guest enthused. "The Zelnik family. We so greatly esteem your family's illustrious history. Not just esteem, cherish! At the beginning, if I am not mistaken, the two older brothers arrived—Boris and Simeon Zelnik. They came from a little hamlet in the Kharkov district in order to establish an entirely new farming colony here, in the heart of the untamed landscape of the forsaken Menashe highlands. There was nothing here. A desolate plain of thorns. There weren't even any Arab villages in this valley; they were all on the other side of the hills. Later, Boris and Simeon were joined by their young nephew, Leon, or if you insist on it, Akabia Aryeh. Then, at least according to the conventional story, Simeon and Boris went back, in turn, to Russia, and there Boris murdered Simeon with a hatchet, and only your grandfather—your grandfather? Or your grandfather's father?—only Leon Akabia stubbornly remained. Not Akabia? Akiva? Excuse me. Akiva. To make a long story short, it's like this: By coincidence, we, the Maftzirs, are also from Kharkov! From the forests of Kharkov! Really! Maftzir! Perhaps you've heard the name? We had a very famous cantor, Shaya Leib Maftzir, and there was one Gregory Moisevitch Maftzir, a very important general in the Red Army. A very, very important general, but Stalin had him executed. In the purges of the nineteen-thirties."



"It's made entirely out of rejected résumés."

• •

The man stood up and imitated a firing squad with his two chimpanzee arms, ticking off a volley of bullets and displaying, as he did so, sharp but not entirely white front teeth. He reseated himself on the bench with a smile, as if he were pleased with the way he had carried out the execution. It looked to Aryeh Zelnik as if the man expected a round of applause, or at least a smile, in exchange for his own saccharine grin.

The host, nevertheless, chose not to smile. He pushed aside the used glass and the pitcher of ice water and said, "Yes?"

Maftzir clasped his left hand in his right hand and pressed it joyfully, as if he had not seen himself for quite a long time and this unexpected meeting had raised his spirits considerably. Beneath the gush of his eloquent vocabulary incessantly burbled a subterranean effluence of inexhaustible mirth, a Gulf Stream of self-satisfied glee.

"Fine. Perhaps we should start laying our cards on the table, as they say. That I allowed myself to intrude on you today is with regard to personal matters between us, and, aside from that, perhaps it also touches on your dear mother, may she live to be a hundred and twenty. In other words, the venerable Mrs. Zelnik. Of course, of course, only on condition that you do not object in any particular way, even a tiny bit, to my broaching this delicate subject?"

Aryeh Zelnik said, "Yes."

The guest rose from his place and removed his dirty, sand-colored jacket. Large perspiration stains showed at the armpits of his white shirt. He hung the jacket on the back of the bench, settled into his seat, and said, "Excuse me. I hope you don't mind. It's just that it is very hot today. Will you allow me to remove my tie as well?"

When his host remained silent, the man slid off his tie with a single pull, in a movement that reminded Aryeh Zelnik of his son, Eldad, and proposed, "As long as your mother is on our hands, we will not, as you know, be able to realize the asset."

"Excuse me?"

"Unless the two of us find her an excellent arrangement in a very excellent institution. And I have just such an institution in mind. That is, I don't have one, but my partner's brothers do. All we need is her consent. But perhaps it would be easier for us to get certified as her guardians? And then there would be no need for her consent?"

Aryeh Zelnik nodded two or three times, and scratched the back of his left hand with the nails of his right hand. He had indeed pondered recently, once or twice, the question of his invalid mother's future: what would happen to her, and to him, when she lost her physical or mental independence, and when the moment came to make a decision. There were times when the idea of parting from his mother filled Aryeh Zelnik with sadness and shame, but there were other times when he almost looked forward to her decline and to the possibilities that would open up before him when she was taken out of the house. These suppressed hopes made him feel guilty and even disgusted with himself. But the strange thing to him was that this repellent man seemed to be reading the ignominy of his own thoughts. He therefore requested of Mr. Maftzir that he go back to the beginning. Whom, precisely, did he represent? Who had sent him here?

Wolf Maftzir chuckled.

“Maftzir. Just call me Maftzir. Or Wolf. In the family, after all, ‘Mr.’ is entirely superfluous.”

Aryeh Zelnik got up. He was a large man, much taller than Wolf Maftzir, and his shoulders were broad and strong, although both men had long arms that reached almost to their knees. Rising, he took two steps, so that he was standing at full height above his guest, and said, “So what do you want.”

He pronounced these words without a question mark, simultaneously buttoning one button in his shirt, through which his gray-haired chest showed.

Wolf Maftzir chirped in a tiny, placatory voice, “Why do we have to hurry, Mr. Zelnik? It's best to proceed with our matter cautiously, with moderation on all sides, so as not to leave open a single loophole, not even a crack. We cannot afford to err in any detail.”

To Aryeh Zelnik, the guest looked a bit flaccid and limp. Apparently, he had been fat, and had only recently, perhaps due to illness, shrunk and caved in. He looked as if his skin were a little too large on him. His eyes were watery and somewhat turbid.

“Our matter?”

“That is, the problem of the elderly Mrs. Zelnik. That is, Mrs. Zelnik, your mother, in whose name our property is still registered, and will be to the end of her life—and who knows what she thought to write in her will—or until the two of us manage to get appointed her guardians.”

“The two of us?”

“This house could be demolished and a sanatorium built in its place. A health farm. We could develop a place that has no peer anywhere in the country: clean air, pastoral tranquillity, rural landscapes the equal of Provence and Tuscany, medicinal herbs, massages, meditation, spiritual guidance. People will pay good money for what our place can offer them.”

“Excuse me, but I think you're in my seat.”

“Excuse me, when, precisely, did we make each other's acquaintance?”

“Oh, but we are already acquaintances and friends. Not just friends, my dear: relatives. And even partners.”

By getting up, Aryeh Zelnik may have intended to force his guest to get up, too, and get out. But the guest did not rise; instead, he continued to sit in his place and even stretched out his hand and poured more ice water with lemon and mint leaves into the glass that had been Aryeh Zelnik's until he had appropriated it for himself. He leaned back on the bench, and now, in his sweat-stained shirt, without his jacket and tie, Wolf Maftzir looked like a trader with time on his hands, a sweaty livestock trader who had come to the village to negotiate with its farmers, patiently and artfully, a cattle deal from which, he was certain, both sides would profit. He evinced a furtive joy in the misfortune he was causing, a kind of surreptitious euphoria, and it was not entirely foreign to his host.

“I,” Aryeh Zelnik lied, “have to go inside now. I must take care of something. Excuse me.”

“I,” Wolf Maftzir said, smiling, “am not in a hurry. If you don't mind, I'll sit and wait for you here. Or perhaps it would be better if I went inside with you and made Mrs. Zelnik's acquaintance? After all, I must gain her confidence quickly.”

“Mrs. Zelnik,” Aryeh Zelnik said, “does not receive visitors.”

“I,” Wolf Maftzir insisted, rising from his seat, ready to accompany his host into the house, “am not exactly a guest. After all, we are, how should I put it, somewhat related? Even partners?”

Aryeh Zelnik suddenly recalled the advice of his daughter, Hila, to give up on his wife and begin a new life. The truth was that he had not made much of an effort to get Na'ama back. After they had quarrelled bitterly and she had gone to visit her best friend, Sara Grant, Aryeh Zelnik had packed all her clothes and belongings and shipped them to Sara's address in San Diego. When Eldad had cut off all contact with him, he had packed up his books and even his childhood toys and sent them to him. He had cleaned away all traces, the way you clean out an enemy position at the end of a battle. A few months later, he had also packed up his own belongings, liquidated his apartment in Haifa, and moved into his mother's house here in Tel Ilan.

Now he wanted, more than anything, absolute relaxation: he wanted each day to be like every other, and its hours free.

Sometimes he went for long walks around the village and even outside it, over the hills that encircled the little valley, through orchards and dusky pine groves. Or sometimes he'd wander around the yard for half an hour, through the remains of his father's farm, which had been liquidated many years before. Some decaying structures still stood—chicken coops, corrugated aluminum sheds, a hayloft, a barn for fattening calves. The stable had become a storeroom for the furniture from the apartment on Mt. Carmel, in Haifa. There, the armchairs and couch and carpets and sideboard and living-room table from Haifa collected dust and adhered to one another with thin nets of spiderwebs. His and Na'ama's old double bed had also been shoved into the stable, on its side, in a corner. The mattress was buried under a pile of dusty quilts.

Aryeh Zelnik said, "Excuse me. I'm busy."

Wolf Maftzir said, "Of course. My apologies. I won't disturb you, my dear sir. Under no circumstances shall I disturb you. On the contrary. From this moment on, I will be perfectly silent. I won't make a sound."

With that, he strode in his host's footsteps into the house, which was dusky and cold, and smelled faintly of sweat and old age.

Aryeh Zelnik stood his ground. "You will please wait for me outside," he said.

Although what he actually meant to say, even somewhat rudely, was that the visit had come to an end and that the stranger was requested to leave.

But the guest didn't dream of leaving. He floated in after Aryeh Zelnik, and on his way down the hall opened door after door, serenely surveying the kitchen, the study, Aryeh Zelnik's hobby room, with its model airplanes made of balsa wood suspended by sturdy cords from the ceiling and swinging slightly in the breeze, as if preparing for brutal dogfights. His behavior reminded Aryeh Zelnik of his own habit, dating back to childhood, of opening every closed door and checking to see what lay hidden behind it.

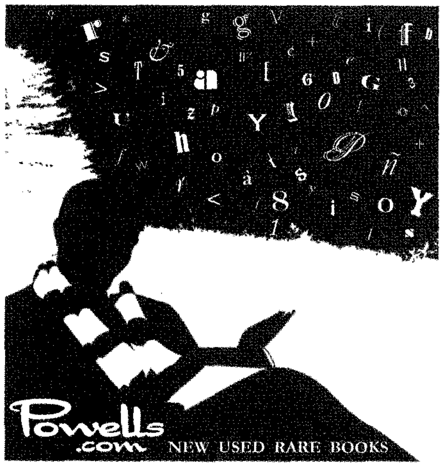
When the two of them reached the back of the house, at the end of the hallway, Aryeh Zelnik blocked with his body the entrance to his own room, which had once been his father's. But Wolf Maftzir had no intention of invading his host's bedroom. Instead, he knocked gently on the deaf old woman's door and, since there was no response, he placed his palm, as if in a tender caress, on the door handle and opened it softly and entered and saw the woman, Rosalia, lying in the center of a wide double bed, covered up to her chin with a woolen blanket, her head wrapped in a kerchief, her eyes closed, and her bony, toothless jaws moving as if she were incessantly chewing.

"Just as we dreamed," Wolf Maftzir chuckled. "Greetings, my dear Mrs. Zelnik. We missed you so much, and we so keenly hoped to meet you in person! You must, of course, be very happy to see us?"

And he leaned over her and kissed her twice, long kisses on her two cheeks, and then he planted another kiss on her forehead, until the old woman opened her clouded eyes and stretched out a skeletal hand from under her blanket and stroked Wolf Maftzir's head and mumbled something and then something else; her other hand also emerged from under the blanket and, with both hands, she pulled his head toward her, and he acceded and leaned even farther over and slipped off both shoes below the bed and bent over and kissed her on her toothless mouth and lay down beside her in the bed and pulled the edge of the blanket over himself and said, "Here, this way," and said also, "Greetings, my very dear Mrs. Zelnik."

Aryeh Zelnik hesitated a moment or two, turned his gaze to the open window, through which he could see one of the abandoned farm sheds, as well as a dusty cypress up which orange bougainvillea had climbed with fiery fingers. He circuited the double bed and closed the shutters and the window and drew the curtain, and, as he darkened the room, he unbuttoned his shirt and undid his belt and he also removed his shoes and undressed and lay down on the bed beside his ancient mother. And so they lay, the three of them, the lady of the house between her mute son and the stranger, who did not stop petting and kissing her and murmuring softly, "Everything will be fine here, my dear Mrs. Zelnik. Everything will be wonderful. We will arrange everything." ♦

(Translated, from the Hebrew, by Haim Watzman.)



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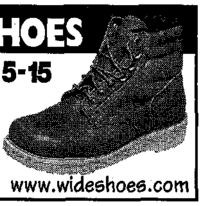
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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

VEGETABLE LOVE

The history of vegetarianism.

BY STEVEN SHAPIN

During the great black-pudding controversies of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was put about that Sir Isaac Newton abstained from this dish because of the Old Testament prohibition against eating blood. After his death, Newton's niece defended his reputation, insisting that he had followed St. Paul's injunction not to make a fuss about food prohibitions—don't be like the bloody Jews—and to "take & eat what comes from the shambles without asking questions for conscience sake." It was true, she explained, that Newton refrained from eating black pudding and also rabbits (whose meat remained bloody because they were killed by strangulation), but his reasons were quite different from those alleged: "He said meats strangled were forbid because that was a painfull death & the letting out the blood the easiest & that animals should be put to as little pain as possible, that the reason why eating blood was forbid was because it was thought the eating blood inclined men to be cruel."

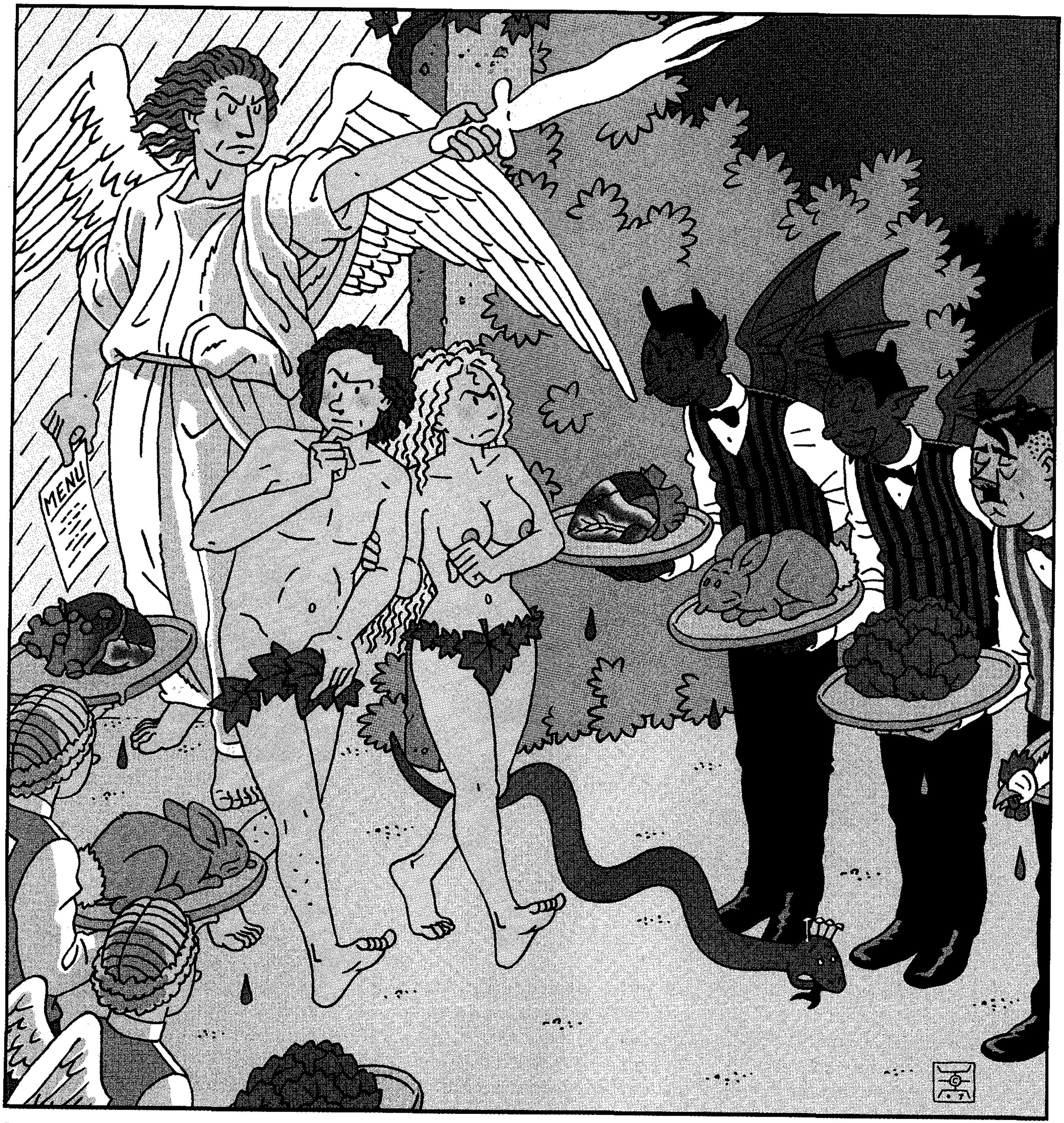
By the time of Newton's death, in 1727, the English black-pudding debate had been running for most of a century. In the "Triall of a Black-Pudding" (1652), Thomas Barlow, a future bishop of Lincoln, noted that God had specifically proscribed blood eating among the Hebrews, whose laws of kashruth mandated the slaughtering and handling of food animals so as to drain them, as far as possible, of residual blood. Genesis 9:4 said, "Flesh with the life thereof, which is the Blood thereof, shall ye not eat," and Leviticus 17:10 underlined the prohibition: "Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people." Barlow pointed out that the New Testament had never rescinded this law, despite the relief from various other Jewish dietary prohibitions offered by both Jesus and Paul; furthermore, the ban on eating blood and the flesh of strangled animals was repeated in the Acts of the Apostles. God, Barlow asserted, "would not have Men eat the life and the soul of Beasts, a thing barbarous and unnaturall." No meat was unclean in itself, but that bit of black pudding in the Great British Breakfast was a violation of both Jewish law *and* the Christian dispensation.

In Newton's time and beyond, you couldn't discuss meat eating or its rejection without biting into some tough theology, and Tristram Stuart's sprawling "The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times" (Norton; $29.95) shows just how hard it was to decipher God's dietary will and how many other considerations—both sacred and secular—were wrapped up in decisions about whether or not it was right to eat animals. The book is a magnificently detailed and wide-ranging collection of scholarship on what has been said to justify either refraining from meat or consuming it. Of course, a history of justifications is not the same thing as a history of what people actually ate, or didn't. For many people, through most of history, not eating meat was a given: it was just too scarce or expensive. But, among the few who had the resources, meat's richness, fatty satisfaction, and nourishment were much appreciated, as in the wonderful Scottish Selkirk Grace:

> Some hae meat and canna eat,
> And some wad eat that want it;
> But we hae meat and we can eat,
> And sae the Lord be thankit.

With few exceptions, European proponents of vegetarianism emerged from those who had meat. You can define vegetarianism in any number of ways, but the simple absence of meat from the diet isn't an interesting way to do it. To be culturally significant, you need some sort of principled justification, and there has been no shortage of that. The arguments that Stuart assembles are part of an immensely tangled and resonant debate. There's no demonstration of the wrongness of eating flesh that hasn't been countered by equally powerful arguments for its rightness, and different justifications have a way of both supporting and interfering with one another. Broadly speaking, though, for many centuries the debate centered on three questions, each of which was reflected in Newton's dietary choices and the objections raised to them: there was the religious question, concerning the implications of Scripture for human alimentation; there were medical questions about the effect of eating meat on human health and character; and there was a philosophical debate about the proper relationship between man and other animals. There was no distinct category you could call moral, because all of them were, as they remain, intensely moral. Vegetarianism has always been less about why you should eat plants than about why you shouldn't eat animals. And so arguments about vegetarianism, by drawing attention to rights that we claim for ourselves but deny to other animals, inevitably involve basic questions about what it is to be human.

When Newton's friends and biographers tried to clarify his views on black pudding and rabbit meat, they weren't afraid that he'd be thought a closet Jew; they were concerned that he'd be taken for something called a Pythagorean. In the sixth century B.C., Pythagoras of Samos—he of the theorem relating

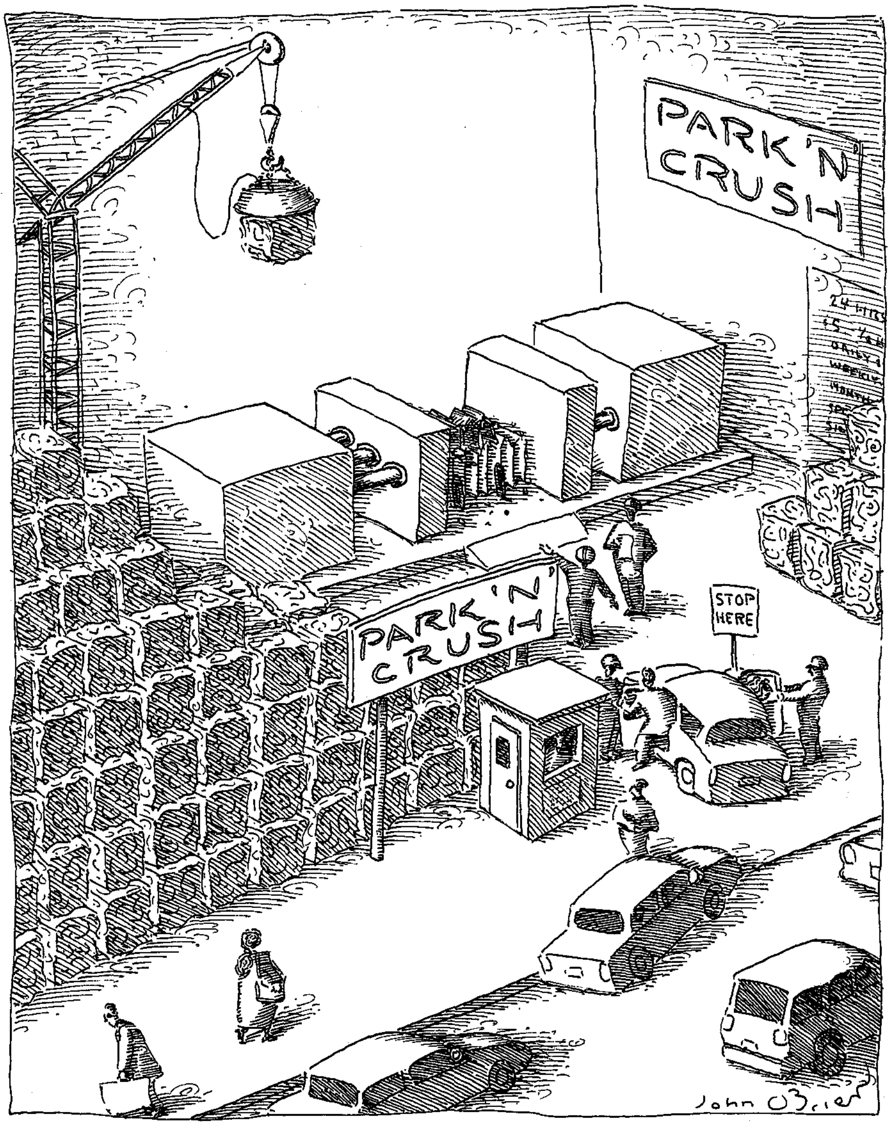


Debates about meat eating have long had a theological character, involving basic questions about our place in God's creation.

EXEM STORY

the hypotenuse and the perpendicular sides of a right triangle—founded a community of mystical mathematicians who, it was said, observed a general prohibition against eating animals, "as having a right to live in common with mankind." Interest in the Pythagorean ban was renewed in the third and fourth centuries A.D. by pagan Neoplatonist philosophers seeking purification of the soul in advance of the afterlife, and it persisted until at least the early nineteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the resonance of the term "Pythagorean" was more dietary than mathematical. One explanation of Pythagoreans' vegetarianism was their adherence to a doctrine known as metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. If your soul, after death, could pass into the body of another animal species, vegetarianism was the only sure way to avoid cannibalism. For Christians, however, metempsychosis was heresy. Immortal souls did not migrate between species; they shuttled between earth, Heaven, and Hell—sometimes disembodied from their human frame but never entering into that of another species. During the Middle Ages and the early modern period, anyone advocating vegetarianism might be suspected of belief in pagan metempsychosis.

Even among the devout, there was ample room for disagreement. Original sin—eating fruit from the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil instead of from the permitted Tree of Life—was clearly a bad food choice, but there was controversy about Adam and



Eve's dietary punishment. Some said that it was the labor of agriculture or cooking: "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Others, however, said that the punishment was the eating of meat. After the Fall, plants had become less nutritious, or the human body had become less able to extract nutriment from plants, and we were now metabolically obliged to kill animals and eat their flesh. Meat eating, then, was a permanent reminder of our sinfulness. Some commentators went further, saying that our fallen nature had given us a taste for blood, and that we could gauge the extent of our wickedness by our relish for the flesh of dead animals and by our willingness to make them suffer. Other Christians rejected all potentially vegetarian interpretations, pointing out that God, from the outset, had given Adam and Eve "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," and that when, some verses later, God mentioned the edibility of plants, he referred to them as "meat." Some even argued that the suffering of animals killed for food was proof of their sinful nature. Flesh eating was not only part of God's plan; it might even be a divine duty.

When you cited and interpreted Genesis, you were, at the same time, taking a view on what was natural for human beings to eat—what their original diet was and how both that diet and the human constitution had been affected by the fall from grace. For this reason, religious arguments about food have shaded into concerns about what is good for your physical and mental health. The medical framework handed down from the first-century physician Galen sought to explain how different diets worked on your emotions and your personality. Evaluations and prescriptions might differ, but a causal link between diet and character was generally accepted. Meat made you brave; bloody meat made you bloody-minded. Late-seventeenth-century English vegetarian writers blamed meat eating for making people "sordid, surly, and Soldiers"; it was something people did to have their "bestial Nature fortify'd."

But similar reasoning could be enlisted on behalf of the carnivore. The roast beef of Olde England was character-building food, stout fare for stouthearted men, while it was widely presumed that a vegetable diet made men weak, timorous, and effeminate. In Shakespeare's "Henry V," on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt, the French observe that the "island of England breeds very valiant creatures," feeding on "great meals of beef," so that they "eat like wolves and fight like devils." Conversely, it was common for physicians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to proscribe meat for patients who had weak constitutions or led sedentary lives. In Galenic medical traditions, roast beef was forbidden to scholars and philosophers, either because it stimulated their natural "melancholic" humor or because the difficulty of digesting it drained the vital spirits away from higher contemplation. In "Twelfth Night," Sir Andrew Aguecheek confesses, "I am a great eater of beef and I believe that does harm to my wit." Belief in the causal connection between meat and the masculine virtues persisted even after the decline of the Galenic medical tradition: Mahatma Gandhi, before reconverting to his original vegetarianism, briefly thought "that meat eating was good, that it would make me strong and daring, and that, if the whole country took to meat eating, the English could be overcome."

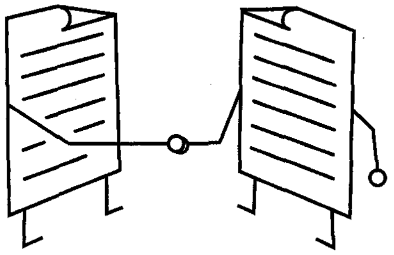
The encounter between Indian and European traditions provides Stuart's book with one of its most striking and contentious assertions. Europeans, having long believed that animal flesh was necessary to sustain vigorous life, were astonished at the existence of the pagan yet pious Brahmins, who ate no meat but evidently thrived. Stuart, a British historian who lived for some years in India, endeavors to show that the spread of vegetarian doctrines in the West during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a result of growing familiarity with the customs of colonized India. Evidently on the side of history's herbivores, he “outs” as vegetarians canonical thinkers who occasionally reduced their meat intake or advised others to do so; he judges the number of Enlightenment vegetarians to have been “incalculably large”; and he celebrates vegetarianism as the leading edge of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thought. Like so many other arguments in the vegetarian debate, though, the news from India could be used by both sides. Were the Brahmins moral exemplars, or did they prove the association between vegetarianism and religious error?

There is also a big difference between those who refrained from eating meat as part of an abstemious medical regimen and those who took a principled stand against the killing of animals for food, and Stuart tends to underplay the ambiguity of their dietary choices. The great eighteenth-century Scottish diet doctor George Cheyne, who at one point weighed four hundred and forty-eight pounds, was famous for having shed much of his fat by adopting a diet of vegetables and milk, and Stuart notes with approval that Cheyne urged a plant-based diet on many of his patients, including the novelist Samuel Richardson. But Stuart omits to say that Cheyne did not prescribe vegetarianism universally: he reckoned that someone following an ordinary course of life might healthily consume half a pound of “Flesh Meat” a day. Cheyne was outraged by rumors that he forbade meat eating as a general rule. Vegetarianism was reserved for the most desperate medical circumstances.

Cheyne's prescriptions were based on the new matter theory of the scientific revolution. He thought that the smallest particles of meat were so grossly sized and shaped that they eventually occluded the vessels and obstructed the flow of vital fluids. The fine corpuscles of plant matter had none of these inconveniences, and so were much better for you. But the medical commendation of plant eating retained a strong theological dimension, as when Cheyne wrote, “The infinitely wise *Author* of *Nature* has so contrived *Things*, that the most remarkable *Rules* of preserving *Life* and *Health* are *moral Duties* commanded us.”

The medical idiom for talking about proper diet linked as easily to social and political concerns as it did to religious ones. The connection between eating *carne* and a carnal character made abstinence from flesh eating attractive to radical thinkers who disapproved of violence, war, and the brutish oppression of man by man. And some drew an analogy between the treatment of lower animals and of the lower orders. The seventeenth-century English vegetarian polemicist Thomas Tryon thought that people ate meat so “that they might act like Lions, and Devils, over their own kind as well as over all other Creatures.” Many of the radical political and religious sects that erupted onto the English scene in the mid-seventeenth century used diet to criticize the established social order. If, as the sectaries maintained, God was present in all animate creatures, then animals were our brothers and eating them was a sin.

The eighteenth century saw the emergence of an argument for vegetarianism from the perspective of animal rights. George Cheyne and other commentators argued that the habit of killing, like that of meat eating itself, hardened the heart and the nerves, both figuratively and literally. The squeamish human response to animal suffering was the authentic one; the callous reaction induced by familiarity was accounted artificial or false. “To see the Convulsions, Agonies and Tortures of a Poor *Fellow-Creature* . . . dying to gratify *Luxury* . . . must require a rocky Heart, and a great Degree of Cruelty and Ferocity,” Cheyne wrote. In the early eighteenth century, Bernard Mandeville, in “The Fable of the Bees,” judged, “There is of all the Multitude not one Man in ten but what will own, (if he was not brought up in a Slaughter-house) that of all Trades he could never have been a Butcher; and I question whether ever any body so much as killed a Chicken without Reluctancy the first time.” Previous eras had seen meat eating as constitutionally conducive to violence, but by the time Jeremy Bentham published “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,” in 1789, the ground had shifted: meat eating *was* violence.



These philosophical and psychological arguments became central to debates about meat eating and remain so. In the seventeenth century, Descartes was at one extreme in insisting that animals were mere machines, no more capable of experiencing pain than a clock, yet even his followers had to come to terms with solid evidence that many people nonetheless felt moved by signs of animal pain. The Cartesians had a response: any such human reaction was itself just a mechanical reflex. There were no moral obstacles to keep you from enjoying the fruits of the slaughterhouse. For others, however, our capacity to be moved by animal pain was powerful proof of fellowship, proof that we share a moral order with the beasts. Those who framed such arguments didn't doubt that this sympathy was a natural human reaction, evidence to be set against scriptural permission to eat meat.

Compassion-based vegetarianism soon assumed the tone of a moral crusade. The poet Shelley, a sometime vegetarian, was certain that Robespierre's Terror would never have happened had the Paris population “satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature” and that Napoleon would never have made himself emperor had he “descended from a race of vegetable feeders.” George Bernard Shaw is said to have asked, “While we ourselves are the living graves of murdered beasts, how can we expect any ideal conditions on this earth?” Yet there is no straight path from the renunciation of meat to a politics of virtue. Nazi vegetarianism raises obvious problems in this regard. Stuart asserts that Hitler's strict adherence to a vegetarian diet was largely medical: “Throughout his life, Hitler continued to believe that abstaining from meat alleviated his chronic flatulence, constipation, sweating, nervous tension, trembling of muscles, and the stomach cramps that convinced him he was dying of cancer.” The Nazi leadership, however, sought to extrapolate ideologies of wider application from the Führer's dietary choices. Himmler praised the constitutional virtues of vegetable consumption; he wanted the Waffen S.S. to go vegetarian and thought that once the Germans had dietetically cleansed themselves they would undoubtedly rule the world. Göring arrived at a twisted version of the humanitarian argument, threatening "those who still think they can treat animals as inanimate property" with the concentration camp.

What about us? Theological arguments still flourish: witness such best-sellers as Don Colbert's "What Would Jesus Eat?" (2002) and Jordan S. Rubin's "The Maker's Diet" (2004). So do medical concerns, though they have changed their idiom—from the Galenic "breeding of ill humors" to modern worries about, say, the accumulation of cholesterol plaques. Recent epidemiological studies suggest that adult vegetarians tend to have lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, lower rates of obesity, and, more controversially, higher childhood I.Q.s—though vegans tend to have *lower* I.Q.s than their carnivorous peers, and the nature of the links between vegetarianism, health, and I.Q. is unclear.

Moral arguments about animal suffering are still central to the popular debate. Paul McCartney once said, "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian," and it's true that many of those who have little experience of what goes on in an abattoir are repulsed by any kind of firsthand knowledge, or even by reading vivid accounts. But things are different on the other side of the slaughterhouse wall. Those who kill animals in the course of their working day may quickly become habituated to it, and to dismiss this effect as mere desensitization effectively discounts *great* knowledge of animal death in favor of *slight* knowledge. Similarly, those who like to romanticize country people are frequently discomfited by their uncuddly ways with livestock. A major source of the sympathy with animal suffering that developed so strongly from the Enlightenment may well be the pattern of urbanization that removed so many of us from daily experience of how our food is produced. Why is it "natural" not to know very much about "nature"?

We also hear a lot, these days, about environmental justifications for vegetarianism, although revulsion at factory farming may point not to vegetarianism but to eating sustainably produced—and probably tastier—meat. Environmentally driven vegetarianism is newly prominent, but it has a convoluted history that goes back at least to the late eighteenth century. The English divine William Paley believed that statecraft should aim at maximizing a nation's population, reckoning that an acre of potentially arable land given over to "grain, roots, and milk" could support twice the number of people as the same land devoted to grazing animals to be killed for food. Adam Smith recommended potatoes over pasturage for much the same reason. Utilitarian political economy was closely related to patriotism, and continued to be, in some quarters, into the twentieth century: during the extreme food shortages at the beginning of the Third Reich, Göring inveighed against farmers who gave grain to animals which should have been used to feed Germans. These days, the environmental argument is not about maximizing the number of people that the environment can sustain but about sustaining the environment. Does producing a pound of lentils involve burning less fossil fuel than producing a pound of hamburger meat, or more? How many square miles of forest are cleared to graze cattle? How much biodiversity is lost both in grazing livestock and in raising the corn and soybeans to fatten them? A recent report by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization reckons that at least eighteen per cent of the global-warming effect comes from livestock, more than is caused by all the world's transportation systems. It has been estimated that forty per cent of global grain output is used to feed animals rather than people, and that half of this grain would be sufficient to eliminate world hunger if—and it's not a small if—the political will could be found to insure equitable distribution.

Yet the energy-cost argument is formidably complicated and cannot by itself support refusing all forms of meat in favor of all forms of plant matter: shooting and eating the deer chewing up the tulips in your garden may turn out to be more environmentally virtuous than dining on tofu manufactured from Chinese soybeans, and walking to the local supermarket for a nice hanger steak cut from a grass-fed New Zealand steer may be kinder to the planet than getting into your Toyota Prius to drive five miles for some organic Zambian green beans. (Stuart takes his ecological convictions seriously: he identifies himself in interviews as a "freegan," diving into Dumpsters to retrieve discarded food, disturbed that "the food thrown away in [Britain] alone is enough to feed millions of people.")

Stuart is of the opinion that vegetarians have long had the best of the intellectual arguments. If so, that just shows how little intellectual arguments matter to populations' eating decisions. The number of vegetarians in developed countries is evidently on the increase, but the world's per-capita consumption of meat rises relentlessly: in 1981, it was 62 pounds per year; in 2002, the figure stood at 87.5 pounds. In carnivorous America, it increased from 238.1 to 275.1 pounds, and the practice is spreading in traditionally herbivorous Asia. Indians' meat consumption has risen from 8.4 to 11.5 pounds since 1981; in China, it has increased from 33.1 to an astonishing 115.5 pounds. This result has nothing to do with principle and everything to do with prosperity. Stuart's "bloodless revolution" has been much less a conversion than a conversation.

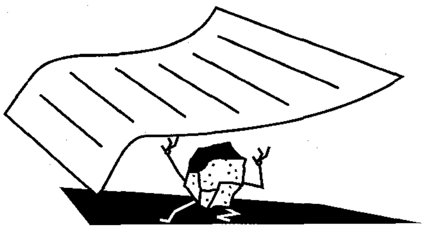
The history of vegetarian (and anti-vegetarian) thought neither adds up nor goes anywhere, except in the sense that it goes everywhere that people disposed to reflection have explored when asking what it means to be human and to be good. It's a history of human morality, but it's no less a history of human ingenuity in moral argumentation. When the sixteen-year-old Ben Franklin converted to vegetarianism, he seemed to have been struck both by its health benefits and by moral sensitivity to animal suffering. But Franklin soon fell off the wagon. On his first sea voyage from Boston, his ship was becalmed off Block Island:

> Our People set about catching Cod, & haul'd up a great many. Hitherto I had stuck to my Resolution of not eating animal Food; and on this Occasion, I consider'd . . . the taking every Fish as a kind of unprovok'd Murder, since none of them had or ever could do us any Injury that might justify the Slaughter. All this seem'd very reasonable. But I had formerly been a great Lover of Fish, & when this came hot out of the Frying Pan, it smeled admirably well. I balanc'd some time between Principle & Inclination: till I recollected, that when the Fish were opened, I saw smaller Fish taken out of their Stomachs: Then thought I, if you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you. So I din'd upon Cod very heartily and continu'd to eat with other People, returning only now & then occasionally to a vegetable Diet. So convenient a thing it is to be a *reasonable Creature*, since it enables one to find or make a Reason for everything one has a mind to do. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Paula Spencer, *by Roddy Doyle (Viking; $24.95).* In this snappy, brilliant novel, Doyle revisits the life of Paula Spencer, the heroine of his 1996 book, "The Woman Who Walked Into Doors." A decade on, Paula has been off the bottle for four months and five days, her abusive husband has been shot while robbing a bank, and her four children are—almost—grown: a daughter with a job in sales buys Paula one appliance after another in an effort to make her mom's life work; a son, recovering from heroin addiction, shows up after an absence of nine years, competent and silent; her younger daughter is drinking herself senseless at twenty-two; and her younger son, worried and self-contained, is still in high school. Doyle's depiction of a seething home life is penetrating, and Paula, as she patches a self together from remnants, emerges as an inspiring heroine without a hint of smarminess.

The Virgin of Flames, *by Chris Abani (Penguin; $14).* The third novel by the Nigerian-born Abani centers on Black, an artist in East Los Angeles who inadvertently turns the building where he lives above a tattoo parlor into a shrine by appearing at the door of a spaceship he has built on the roof dressed as the Virgin of Guadalupe. Black is presented in a noirish framework—one of his friends, a dwarf, quotes copiously from "Farewell, My Lovely"—but Abani's delight in whimsical reversals creates an antic atmosphere that recalls Pirandello more than Chandler. When a transvestite lap dancer whose pictures Black collects discovers he's besotted with her, she—unused to love—calls him, while Black's Lexus-driving friend, a Rwandan refugee, has found happiness in California working as a butcher.



Lover of Unreason, *by Yehuda Koren and Eilat Negev (Carroll & Graf; $27.95).* Assia Wevill, known as the woman who took Ted Hughes from Sylvia Plath, not only lived in Plath's apartment after her suicide by carbon-monoxide poisoning but killed herself and her four-year-old daughter in the same manner, six years later. This biography recounts a nomadic childhood spent in Berlin, Pisa, and Tel Aviv; an equally peripatetic adulthood in England, Burma, and Canada (amid three marriages and divorces); and a successful career as an advertising copywriter and translator of Hebrew poetry. Hughes comes off as both brutal (in his perpetual ambivalence about setting up house with Wevill) and beleaguered (in dealing with the histrionics of a woman whose beauty had accustomed her to special treatment). The authors write with nimble, novelistic pacing, though their research yields some details that perpetuate the sense of tawdriness they intended to dispel: "The love nest she shared with Ted was sometimes a 1950 white Ford van that one of Ted's friends loaned him."

Paris, *by Andrew Hussey (Bloomsbury; $32.50).* Hussey highlights the "marginal and subversive" in this entertaining cultural history. Chronicling the city's development "in space, in time and on the street," he pays keen attention to traces of the past that persist in the landscape of the present, and delights in detailing the "hustlers, whores and heretics" who fuel the beguiling chaos he portrays as endemic to the city. (In the thirteenth century, streetwalkers wore "bright ribbons . . . at midriff level" to signal their availability.) Hussey's fidelity to the associative quality of urban life sometimes gives his account a disjointed feel. But through his focus on ordinary inhabitants he manages, without being tendentious, to find unconventional perspectives on familiar Paris institutions and sights. When the brashly futuristic Eiffel Tower was erected, in 1889, Parisians dismissed it as a "metal asparagus."

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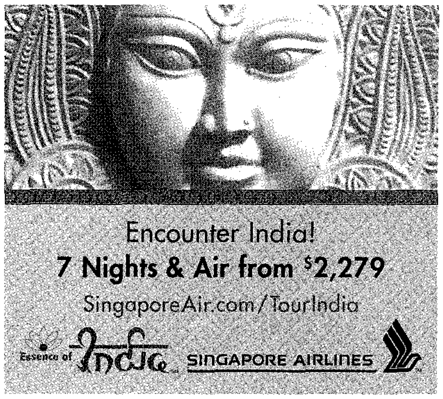

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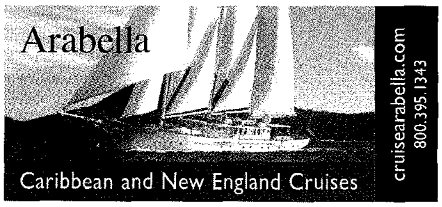

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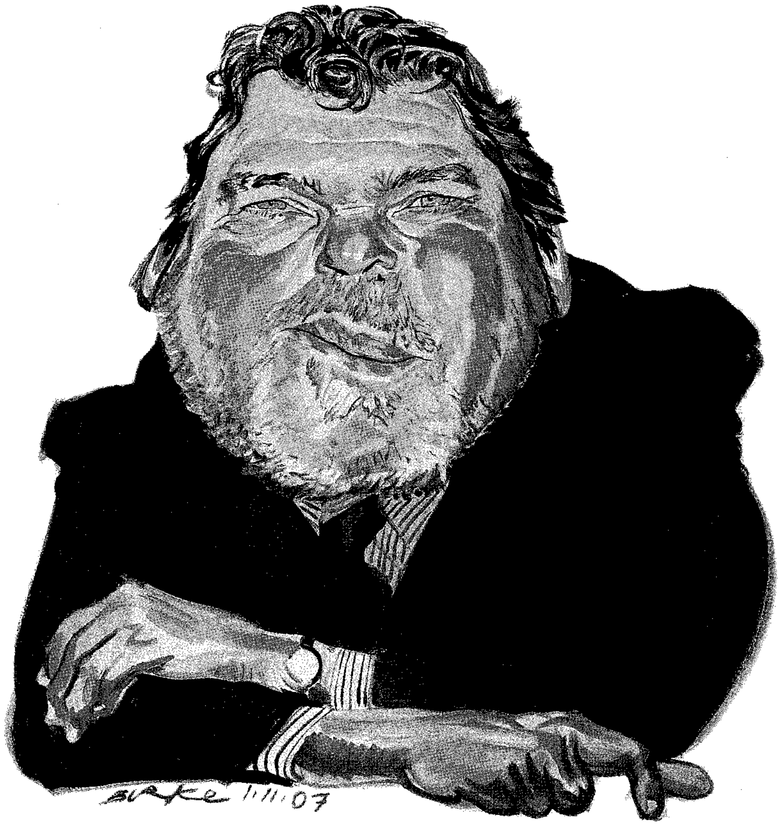

Jann Wenner makes the call to "I'm from Rolling Stone" contestants.

Reality shows exploit dubious myths by turning them into contests—you really can lose thirty pounds, snow a billionaire into giving you a dream job, win the cheerleader's heart with a rose. Simply assemble the cast from a Benetton ad, serve drinks, and start removing the chairs. Someone will always emerge triumphant. MTV's "I'm from *Rolling Stone*" applies this durable formula to six twentyish writers who intern at the magazine for a summer, competing for a one-year contract as a contributing editor. The two music-culture manufactories seem to have devised the program to preserve the bewhiskered legend that they still hire, and chronicle, raw youths.

In the sixties and the early seventies, *Rolling Stone* actually did work something like that. The critics Greil Marcus and Lester Bangs broke into the magazine in their early twenties, and Cameron Crowe was only sixteen when the editors sent him on the road with the Allman Brothers Band—an episode that inspired Crowe's 2000 film "Almost Famous."

Nowadays, *Rolling Stone* is a grown-up business, one whose non-camera-ready interns are in the office making photocopies while the "interns" are out covering Lollapalooza. Despite this rickety foundation, however, the show holds together, because the kids, selected from more than two thousand applicants, are touchingly optimistic—they don't know they're working for the man. Some of them seem to believe that their responsibilities will include jamming about poverty in Africa with Bono and then addressing the global situation in an all-night writing marathon fuelled by mescaline and unchained id. (That's how I do it, but then I'm a seasoned professional.) Others have no idea what's going on. Pete, the beer-pounding Australian crew jock, has barely written anything before; Tika, the self-satisfied African-American lesbian, loses her notebook while writing her first piece; and when Krishtine, the grill-wearing Asian-American hip-hop sprite, gets the you're-in phone call from the magazine's founder and editor, Jann Wenner, she might as well be talking to Archduke Ferdinand.

Krishtine: I'm so excited! Ian, is it? Ian?
Jann: Jann.
Krishtine: Jann?
Jann: Jann.
Krishtine: Spell it for me.

Krystal, an attractive blond poet, is the only one who really seems to know the magazine, at least as it was in the days when Annie Leibovitz spent weeks on the road photographing the Stones (and doing drugs with them, as Wenner rather meanly suggested in a recent "American Masters" about Leibovitz on PBS). When Krystal leaves her sepulchral boyfriend behind in Salinas—forever, it seems clear—she jokes about running off with Steven Tyler, and in a video Q. & A. posted on rollingstone.com she talks about hoping to party with Keith Richards. When Slug, the front man of Atmosphere, tells Krystal, "I totally want to make out with you," her coy laugh suggests, *Well, you're not a legend like Keith Richards—you couldn't be my grandfather—but, then again*... No one seems to have got the memo about sucking face with your subjects.

The interns haven't yet learned to keep their distance, to pigeonhole the work with insidery adjectives (duff, proggy, already dated), and then to award it a safe three stars; they're thrilled to be allowed onstage, punching their fists in the air at song's end. Their cluelessness induces nostalgia: this is what life was like before we were trammelled by BlackBerries and the knowledge of why Jann Wenner mattered.

Colin, a long-haired nineteen-year-old from Eugene, Oregon, is the most wide-eyed—the sort of guy who's inadvertently left behind in the chill-out tent when the van leaves. When he inter-

PHILIP BURKE

views We Are Scientists, he arrives completely unprepared, grasps his pen like a garden tool, and finally mumbles to the lead singer, "I think I have that shirt, actually." After an editor questions the use of "Boho" in his report, he says, "Isn't that short for Brooklyn, or something?" We root for Colin to figure it out, hoping that figuring it out doesn't, this once, amount to some form of selling out.

By making the writers show up for daily news meetings and giving them tight deadlines, the show seems to argue that the values of high school, where you are judged on your cool quotient, must now give way to the values of the adult world, where you are judged, in significant part, on your work. Yet it's not clear that the work the kids are given to do is, in any meaningful sense, real. On rollingstone.com, they're referred to as "characters," and their pieces are preceded by the disclaimer "This is not an official *Rolling Stone* article. What follows is a submission to the MTV reality show." When Wenner first calls Russell—a twitchy former resident of a juvenile institution who, it's clear from the articles on the Web site, is much the best reporter and critic of the six—the editor says, chortling, "I hear you're a real good writer." "Google me!" Russell retorts, which underlines the issue: why hasn't Wenner, the purported arbiter here, read his stuff yet?

Maybe because it doesn't have much to do with picking a winner. The process of prose composition is fairly boring to watch, and shows like this prize drama and charisma—the old high-school values. Russell is the standout in this category, too: he stashes a cigarette behind his ear, breaks furniture, arm-wrestles Method Man, and takes a flying leap into a garbage container to impress Lupe Fiasco. He's also bipolar, arrogant, and wildly self-destructive. Soon, he no longer bothers showing up at the office. After several pep talks go unheeded, Joe Levy, the executive editor, finally explodes, "You are royally screwing it up!" Chastened, Russell promises that he'll get an alarm clock and arrive at work ten minutes early from now on. He adds, irrepressibly, "And then I'm just going to pull out my balls and flap them around."

Is a free-baller what *Rolling Stone* wants? Back when the culture used to pause to digest Hunter S. Thompson's latest screed, perhaps. On the evidence here, *Rolling Stone* now seeks someone skilled at working the words "rolling" and "stone" into every conversation. Reality shows often resemble extended brand-management commercials, and we can almost hear the producers' whispered reminders when Russell remarks, "I think I'm on my way to being an amazingly talented journalist, here at *Rolling Stone*," and when Joe Levy tells Pete, who wrote a piece while drunk, "If you don't take this more seriously, you're not going to last a summer, here at *Rolling Stone*." After a while, "here at *Rolling Stone*" begins to sound like "here at Jonestown."

Some of the interns weren't yet born when Wenner played a *Rolling Stone* editor very like himself in the 1985 film "Perfect." Even then, he was candid about the fact that journalism about rock stars isn't a gonzo expedition in search of elusive truth so much as a mutually wary, mutually beneficial transaction. When Carly Simon complains in the film about being the subject of a hatchet job, Wenner's character replies, "Oh, come on, Carly. The only thing worse than being written about is not being written about." The smartest reality-show contestants understand that the show's ostensible prize isn't nearly as valuable as the exposure along the way, the personal branding, the chance, perhaps, even to land on "The Surreal Life." As Krishtine says, "I'm trying to, like, make myself kinda known on the scene as *Rolling Stone's* hip-hop celebrity." She won't win the job, but she couldn't care less.

So we're buoyed when Colin, of all people, is the first to break through on rollingstone.com. When his musings on We Are Scientists pop up onscreen, he rises gleefully: "I'm a winner! I'm a winner!" Russell tries to help celebrate by grabbing a chair to bash him with. But Colin ducks the slam-dance opportunity in favor of gambolling about, Aquarian style, while crying, "I'm gonna call my mama!" Then he does. The producers probably wish he'd called his papa, instead, so they could have cued up "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," but it's still a sweet moment. The last one, maybe, before it all becomes just a job. ♦

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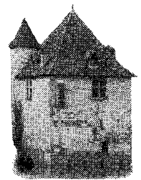
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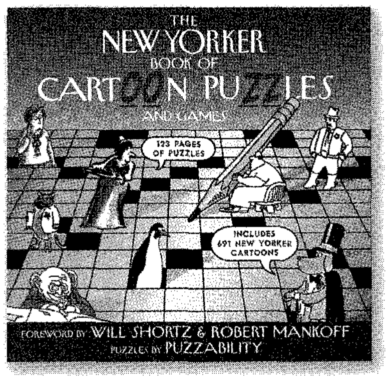

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A FAMILY AFFAIR

Lillian Hellman's "Toys in the Attic."

BY HILTON ALS

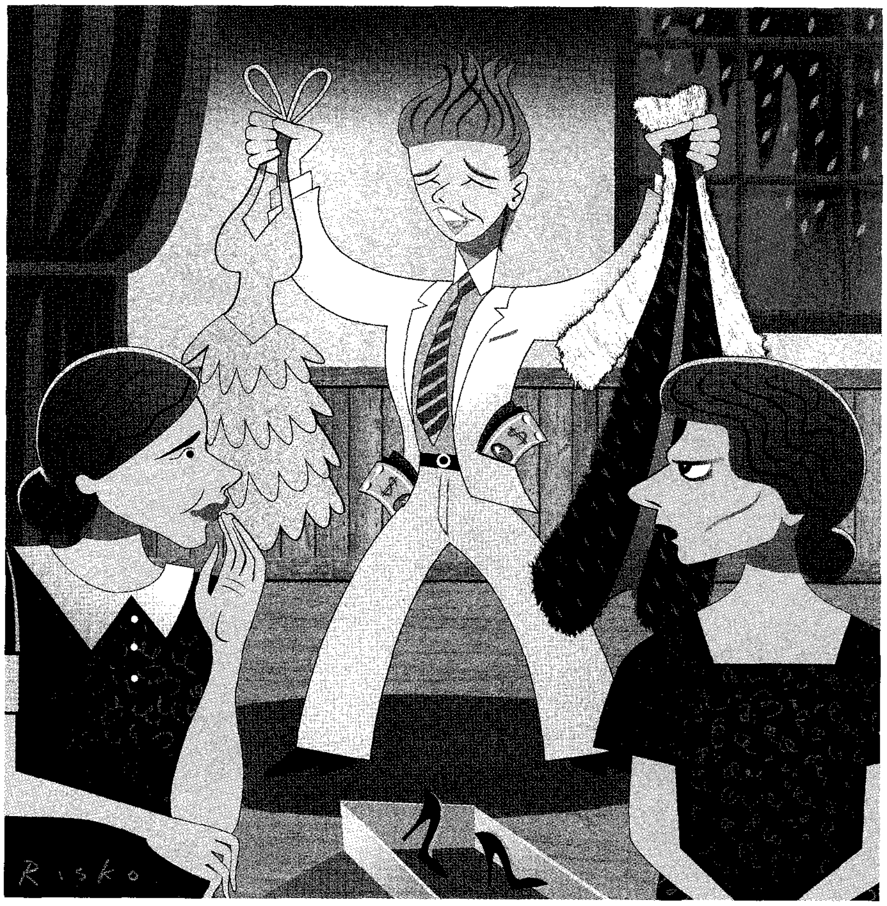
Lillian Hellman's penultimate play, "Toys in the Attic" (now in revival at the Pearl Theatre Company), first produced in 1960, is as creaky as an old four-poster bed. Though it can be pleasant to rest for a moment in its carefully embroidered sheets—if only to be reminded of the familiar scents with which Hellman sprinkled her most autobiographical work: incest, miscegenation, and camellias—the play's charm is musty and, in the end, tiresome. In fact, "Toys in the Attic" is so thin that you may find yourself supplementing the onstage drama with the real family history on which it is based. Hellman's father, Max, who was Jewish, was doted on by his two spinster sisters. After the shoe business that he'd established in New Orleans with the help of his wife's money went under, Max became a travelling haberdashery salesman. (The Hellmans spent part of every year in New York until Lillian was a teen-ager.) According to Hellman lore, Max's sisters, who ran a series of boarding houses, were thrifty and repressed, dour and witty. It's interesting to note that the only significant invention in "Toys in the Attic" is the dialogue, which, as Joan Mellen points out in "Hellman and Hammett," her eminently readable 1996 study, was helped along by the writer Dashiell Hammett, Hellman's companion for many years, who also suggested part of the plot.

In the play, Carrie Berniers (Rachel Botchan) is an unmarried middle-aged office worker who lives in a large house with her sister, Anna (Robin Leslie Brown), who is also unmarried. The Berniers sisters yearn to travel to Europe. But their finances—like their joined lives—make this dream prohibitive. So, instead, they cleave to their routine, discussing what to have for dinner, complaining about the boss, and lamenting the absence of their younger brother, Julian (Sean McNall). But not for long. Near the middle of the first act, Julian arrives for a visit, with his somewhat distracted bride, Lily (Ivy Vahanian), in tow. A sweet dreamer and a failure, Julian wears an ice-cream-colored suit and is all elbows and knees, jutting out into space with the restless impertinence of a boy anxious to become a man. And now, finally, he has a chance to live up to his fantasy and be one: through circumstances that remain unclear for much of the play, Julian has made some money in a business arrangement that he refuses to discuss. He has enough cash to send Carrie and Anna on their long-desired trip, thereby repaying them for the many times they have bailed him out of less profitable ventures. But Carrie and Anna have a hard time believing in his newfound glory, no matter how much he tries to convince them. "Look. It's going to be this way," he says emphatically. "The first money is for us to have things. Have fun. After that, I promise you, we'll invest. And like all people with money, we'll make more and more and more until we get sick of it. Rich people get sick more than we do. Maybe from worry." The real worry, however, for Carrie, at least, is that Julian, by taking a stand and actually fulfilling his sisters' wishes, is detaching himself from them and will no longer be available to her as the feckless object of her incestuous desire. If Julian became his own man, Carrie's control over her siblings would be lost.

Had Hellman stopped there—that is, written a play about the financial and sexual poisons that can infect a man's relationship to himself, as well as to his siblings—she would have produced a strong, dark work with minor Chekhovian undertones. (Hellman edited a collection of Chekhov's letters in 1955.) But she was a creature of fashion first and foremost. She knew what she was talking about when she re-marked, before the House Un-American Activities Committee, in 1952, "I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions." Of course, this is exactly what she did—as a writer. "Toys" is full of borrowings from the work that Tennessee Williams had been producing since the mid-nineteen-forties, and which was then in vogue. Although Hellman based the character of Lily's mother, Albertine (Joanne Camp), and her relationship with a black servant named Henry (Robert Colston) on certain details from her own past, the dramatization of their illicit connection is pure Williams—"Desire and the Black Masseur" meets "The Rose Tattoo." In a sense, "Toys in the Attic" is Hellman's Tennessee Williams play, right down to the setting in his beloved adopted city.

Less an inspired artist, like Williams, than an artisan who was capable of decorating her bricks with filigree when necessary, Hellman had a workmanlike sense of plot; her plays are nothing if not connect-the-dots dramatic, and they rarely, if ever, tell us anything about her inner life. They are more like the posturings of a cranky moralist, intent on pitting right against wrong, poor against rich, and black against white, slicing through the muck of everyone else's complexity and hidden truths. ("I thought you got over that agitprop shit years ago," Hammett told Hellman at one point during the first rehearsals of "Toys.") A kind of Arthur Miller in a skirt, Hellman put herself before her plays and her characters; like Miller, she treated the theatre as a higher form of journalism, a means of addressing the issues that concerned her.

Because there is no emotional center to Hellman's work, there is something desperate in most productions of it. Here, the director, Austin Pendleton, has given Lily and Julian's sexual relationship center stage—an effort to provide a contrast to the sisters' repression, as well as to Henry and Albertine's closeted love. But when McNall and Vahanian flaunt their erotic attraction (Lily rides Julian while wearing a slip), they do not shock; they merely look foolish. The staging itself is stilted, mute where it should sing, suddenly busy when it should be still. Pendleton—a fine director and character actor—seems out of place in this suffocating room, which Hellman has littered with chintz, lace, and the kind of female softness and regret that was not her natural forte as a writer. (Hellman's best character, the complicated villainess Regina Giddens, in her most enduring work, 1939's "The Little Foxes," is a glistening self-portrait of the author as competitive and perpetually dissatisfied.) Pendleton does have a great deal of sensitivity to women. That sensitivity, in fact, undermines his direction of Botchan, whose Carrie should be as acrid and insanity-inducing as arsenic. (Geraldine Page went a bit too gothic with the role in George Roy Hill's 1963 film adaptation.) But Botchan plays the part too sweetly, with an excess of maternal eagerness. (She may also be too young for the role.) It's as if Pendleton couldn't bear to face what a gargoyle Carrie really is, and kept looking for the feminist subtext to a character who is, in sum, a monster. To be fair, Hellman's stage directions, and the play itself, are such a mishmash of different attitudes, influences, and ideologies that it takes a brave actor and an even braver director to get to the heart of the meanness that she wants to explore, and which Jane Bowles characterized as the incredible strength of the weak. By the end of the play, we should be recoiling in horror from Carrie and Lily. Instead, we just want to forget the entire evening.



Rachel Botchan, Sean McNall, and Robin Leslie Brown as conflicted siblings.

The only performer truly to survive Hellman and Pendleton is Robin Leslie Brown, a distinctly serious actress with a sharp, albeit everyday look. (She was captivating as Aline Solness in the Pearl's 2005 production of "The Master Builder.") With her eyes downcast, and gliding patiently, almost wearily, through Hellman's attempts at theatrical lyricism, she reminds us of other spectacularly ordinary actresses, such as Shirley Booth, Maureen Stapleton, and Edie Falco, who manage never to fail their material, even as it fails them. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Palo Alto Daily News.

Someone reported loud chickens. Upon police arrival, the chickens were clucking intermittently.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

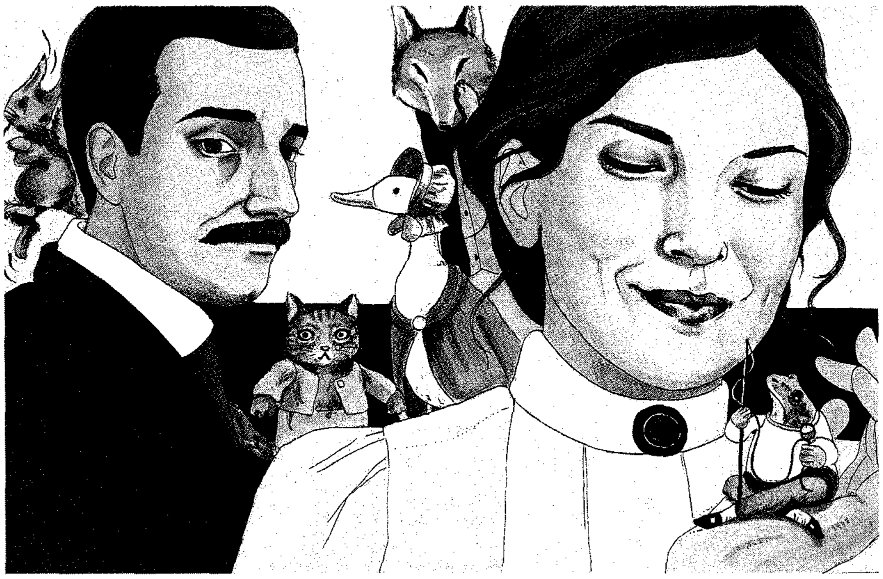
CHILDREN'S TALES

"Miss Potter" and "Abduction: The Megumi Yokota Story."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The blushing cheeks, as round and rosy as apples. The eyes like shiny beads, going twinkle, twinkle. The little paws, busy at their task. And oh! the smile that will not go away. (Even when you wish that it might.) *So* pretty, and *so* particular—what a diverting creature Miss Zellweger is, to be sure!

Her latest starring role is in "Miss Potter," which she also co-produced. This tells the tale of Beatrix Potter, who was born in 1866 and died in 1943. The latter date may surprise many people, who will find it hard to square the world of Potter, all striped petticoats and pocket handkins, with the drone of bombing raids. The work for which she is remembered was the fruit of some twenty years, the ripest of it from no more than a decade: "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" (1902) to "The Tale of Mr. Tod" (1912). The film, written by Richard Maltby, Jr., and directed by Chris Noonan, concentrates on a yet smaller patch of her existence: the period in which, as if emboldened by her most famous hero, she entered a forbidden garden, hoping not to be made into a pie.



Ewan McGregor and Renée Zellweger in a movie about Beatrix Potter.

We begin with Miss Potter pitching Peter Rabbit to publishers, one of whom remarks, out of her hearing, "That book won't sell ten copies." (This is known as the ironical-historical mode, inviting the audience to smirk at the blindness of the past.) Nevertheless, the company, Frederick Warne, agrees to publish, if only to give Norman Warne (Ewan McGregor), the baby of the family, something to do with his time. Why, one must ask, did McGregor take this part? I can only imagine that he received the script one morning, after a late night, saw the words "Beatrix Potter," assumed that he was being offered the role of his namesake, Mr. McGregor, fancied himself in a long white beard running past cabbages with a rake, mouthing Scotch oaths at departing vermin, called his agent to accept, and went back to bed. Not until later did he realize that he would be required to utter the line, "We shall give them a bunny book to conjure with."

Only one man on earth can speak those words with a straight face, and that is Hugh Hefner. Needless to say, McGregor takes emergency precautions, appearing throughout in a mustache the size of a yew hedge, and thus defying us to work out whether his face is straight or not. It also protects him from the chill, withering glare of Beatrix's mother (Barbara Flynn), who disapproves of Norman's presence. "I wish you wouldn't invite tradespeople into the house. They carry dust," she says to her daughter. The problem, we soon gather, is worse than that. Norman is not just a fur ball. He is a suitor, and, in the London of 1902, those clambering to the upper reaches of the social ladder had absolutely no intention of marrying off their children to anybody perched halfway up. What the movie fails to add is that the Potters were Unitarians, and therefore cut off by their faith from the highest rungs. Maltby's script, however, does allow Beatrix a suitably tart moment, in which she reminds her father, Rupert (Bill Paterson), that the family money came from printing factories. In other words, the young lady cautioned against tradesmen was herself only two generations away from trade.

She cuts, by any standards, an extraordinary figure. Read the new biography, "Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature," by Linda Lear, and you sense a woman poised between late-Victorian constraint and the promises, intellectual and amorous, of liberation. Long before she was published by Frederick Warne & Co., she was a botanical illustrator of great skill, specializing in fungi, and there is a wrenching story of Potter taking her drawings to experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, where, according to Lear, she "passively acquiesced in the gentlemen's dismissal of her" and succumbed to "a sort of instant neurasthenia" as a result. Yet that day, in 1896, was not a total defeat, for in Potter's description of Kew's director, recorded in a private journal—"a thin, elderly gentleman in summery attire, with a dry, cynical manner, puffing a cigarette, but wide awake and boastful"—we suddenly hear, as though from a distant trumpet, the clear and cutting note of her mature prose. She would take the boasters to task. She would nail, for eternity, certain strains of the male type: the polite gentleman with sandy whiskers, reading his newspaper on a tree stump, who greets Jemima Puddle-Duck; old Mr. Benjamin Bunny, "who had no opinion whatever of cats"; and, above all, the portly, terrifying condescension of Samuel Whiskers—"'What do you mean by tumbling into my bed, all covered with smuts?' said the rat, chattering his teeth."

"Miss Potter" is a grave disappointment, because it never listens out for that note. It is a soft, woolly film about a smart, unsentimental woman who did constant battle with her frustrations. It lapses, during the longueurs, into glorious views of the Lake District, without noticing that Potter herself, though steeped in that countryside (she became a proto-Green, buying several farms to keep them from developers), took care to parcel it out in tempting glimpses on the page, in the crannies of her industrious narratives. The hills and fells led her not into Wordsworthian rapture but into a social comedy as concise, and often as acidic, as Jane Austen's. (It was Graham Greene who noted in an essay of 1933 that Potter "puts aside love and death with a gentle detachment," and pointed up the rage and havoc that quicken "The Tale of Two Bad Mice.") The trouble with "Miss Potter" is not that it takes liberties with the facts—the real Norman Warne proposed by letter, for instance, whereas Ewan McGregor does it by breathing all over Renée Zellweger at a Christmas party—but that its vision of Beatrix looks more like one of her furred or feathered subjects than like their sharp-tongued creator. She springs from the film as a fussy and hot-tempered Miss Puddle-Duck, with a touch of Tabitha Twitchit.

The joke is that the actress who should have played Beatrix Potter, Emily Watson, is right there, standing beside her. Watson has to make do with the part of Millie Warne, Norman's unmarried sister, yet with her round-eyed gaze and her unembarrassed directness she has the true Potterite nerve: "I warn you, I'm prepared to like you *very* much," Millie declares on first meeting Beatrix. Would Watson have stood for some of the nonsense to which Zellweger submits? There are times when, with a sort of mad simper, Beatrix has to address her characters on the page ("Je*mi*ma!"), whereupon the animal in question turns briefly into a cartoon. The sight of Miss Puddle-Duck opening her beak and laughing like her badass American cousin Donald, then turning around and wiggling her rump, may be a wild misjudgment on the director's part, but it drives home just how little overt expression there is on a page of Potter. Her creatures seem uniformly calm and attentive, even as they scheme and scold or play rough. They, too, are creatures of an age caught between decorum and release. "Little rubbish, like mice and rabbits," she called them in old age, and both her life as a farmer and her work as an artist were a protest against the cute. If she is loved for her bunny books, that is because, as a girl, she used to boil her dead pet rabbits and measure the bones, the better to grasp their anatomy. If you seek to understand this remarkable woman, don't watch "Miss Potter." Watch "Fatal Attraction."

The events that unfold in the new documentary "Abduction: The Megumi Yokota Story" could have been told as fiction, but they would have seemed too much—too unbelievable, too merciless. We never meet the girl in the title, who is presumed dead. All we have are photographs, the recollections of others, and a recording of her singing a Schumann solo in a school concert.

Megumi was a thirteen-year-old living in Niigata, Japan, when she vanished, on November 15, 1977. For years, her parents heard nothing. There were reports of "something strange" on the northwestern coast of Japan—young couples were going missing—but it took two decades for the truth to come out. All the victims had been kidnapped by agents from North Korea and spirited back to that country. By the time Kim Jong-Il, its ruling madman, admitted the deed to the Japanese Prime Minister, in 2002, eight of the thirteen abductees had died—in captivity, as it were, like rare species. Megumi, who had married a North Korean and borne a child, had allegedly committed suicide, although the remains finally returned to her parents were found, under testing, not to be hers. (Even that finding, agonizingly, remains in doubt.) The film, directed by Chris Sheridan and Patty Kim and produced by Jane Campion, is sometimes too ominous for its own good; we need no bruised skies or churning seas to stress the foulness of this state-sponsored crime. But the testimony gathered here gives the film an enduring grip, and none of us could hope to match the forbearing persistence of Megumi's parents. The worst aspect is, as so often, the most prosaic: the main reason that North Korea stole human beings was because it needed language teachers for its spies. All that grief, just for a chance to talk. ♦

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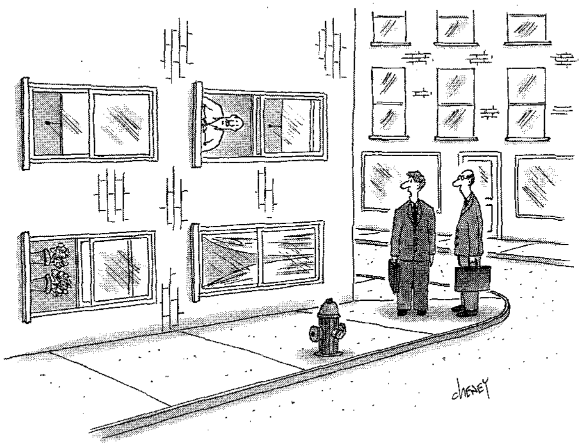
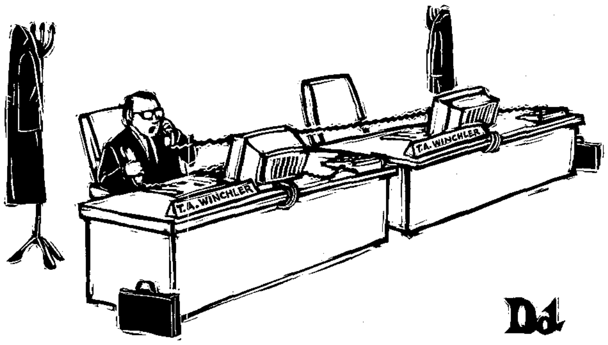
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Mick Stevens, must be received by Sunday, January 21st. Finalists in the January 8th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the February 5th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"The elevator takes some getting used to."
Terry McGurn, Reston, Va.



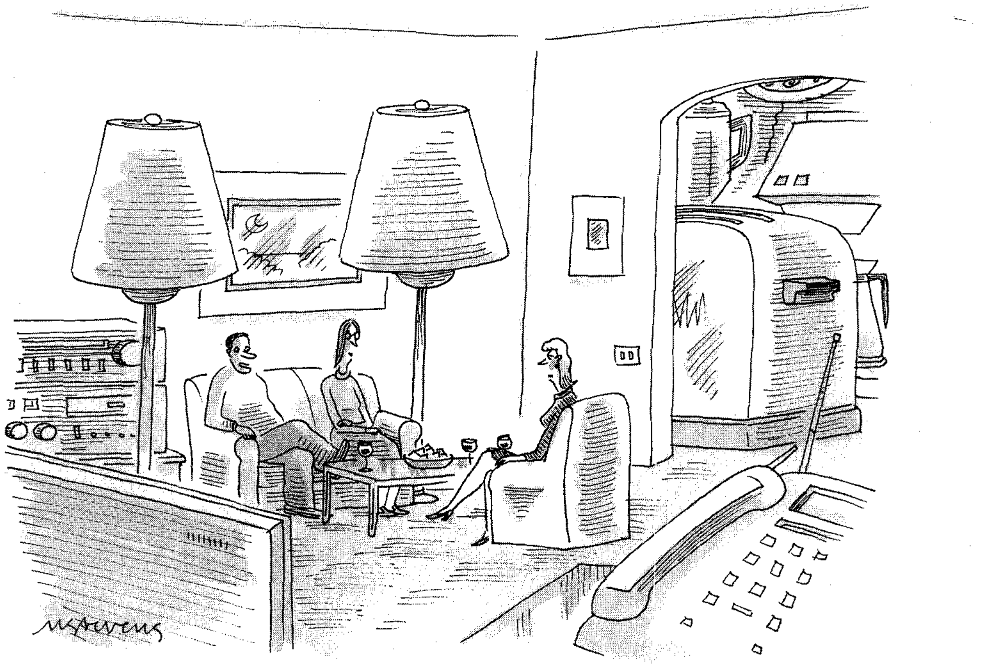
THE FINALISTS

"O.K., I've backed everything up. Now what?"
David Barrow, DeKalb, Ill.

"Actually, it was more of a lateral move than a promotion."
Gary Tunnicliffe, New York City

"Two for the price of one? Yes, I may very well be interested."
Jennifer Lynn Weston, Hamden, Conn.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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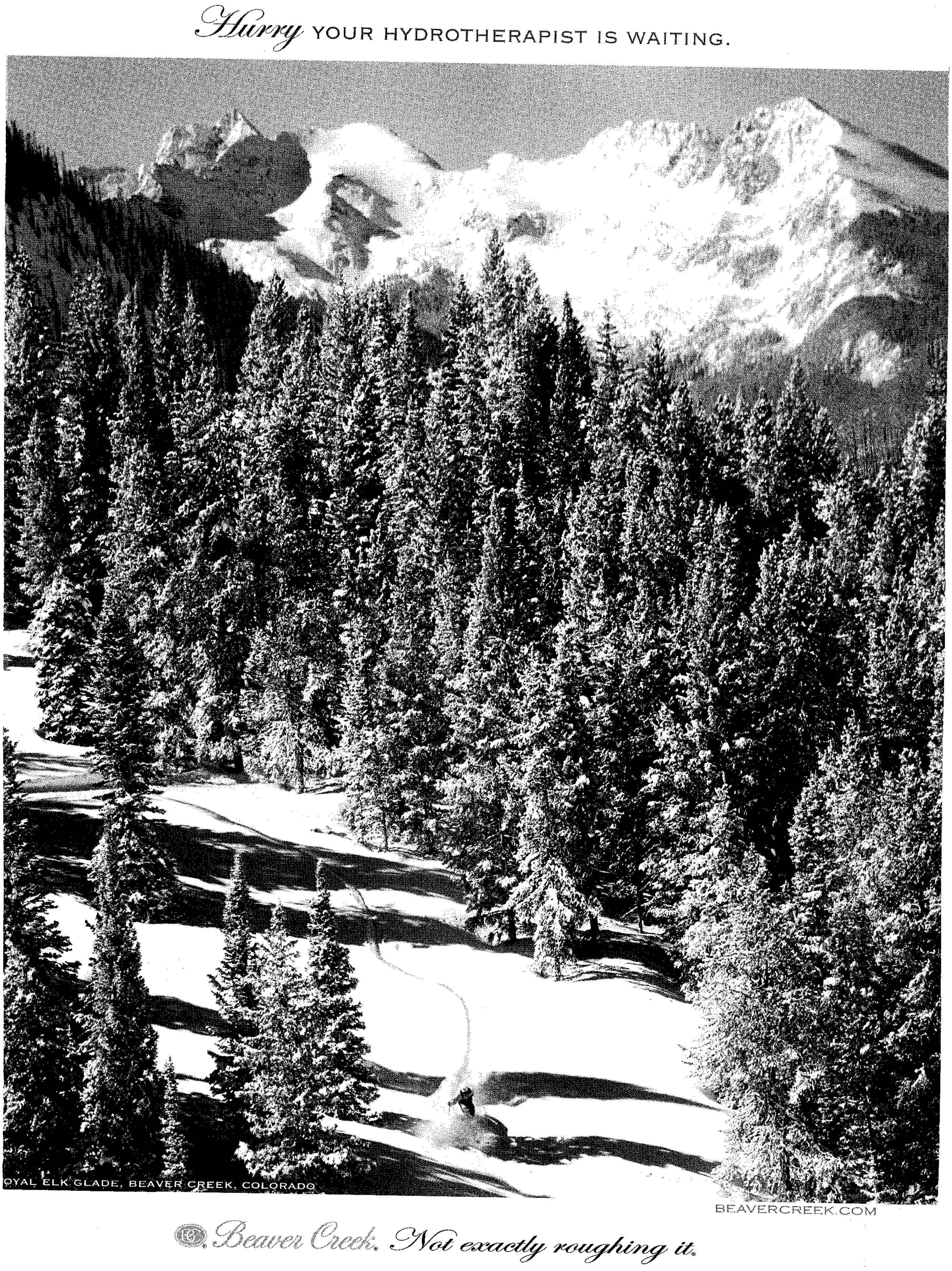
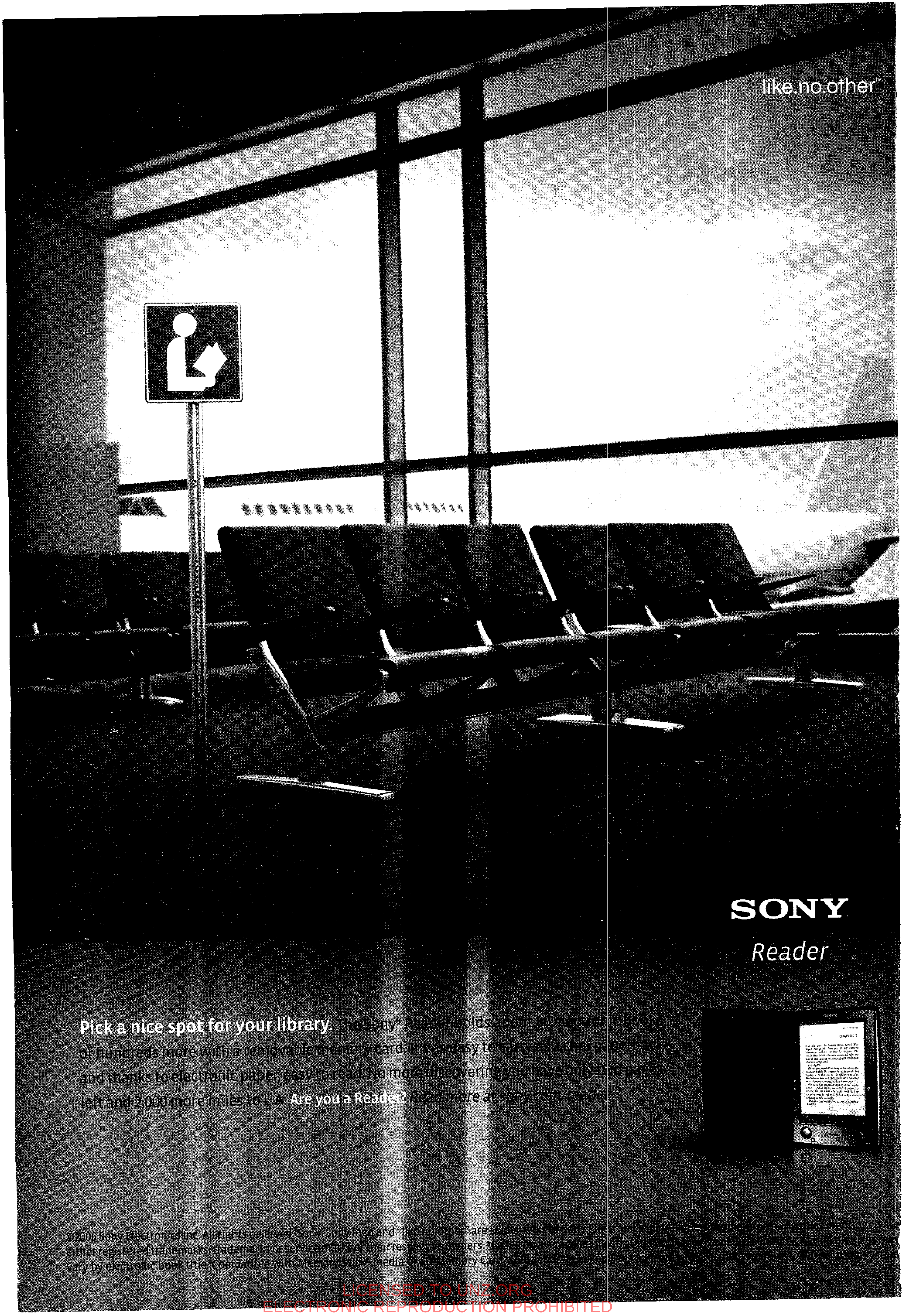

Hurry YOUR HYDROTHERAPIST IS WAITING.
OYAL ELK GLADE, BEAVER CREEK, COLORADO
BEAVERCREEK.COM
Beaver Creek. Not exactly roughing it.



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